VEDIC HYMNS

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VEDIC HYMNS

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WISDOM OF THE EAST

VEDIC HYMNS

TRANSLATED FROM THE RIGVEDA
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY EDWARD J. THOMAS, M.A., D.LITT.

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INTRODUCTION

THE theory of evolution, which once appeared to explain away religion as an elaboration of ancient superstition, has had an exactly opposite result. Evolution shows us man's repeated attempts at interpreting and accounting for all the facts of his experience, and there has arisen, at more than one time and place, the question of the nature of existence as a whole, and of man's relation to it. Not that the question had to be asked in this general form before religion could arise. What the actual problems were, to which man's earliest religious views were the answer, belongs at present to sociological speculation. Yet if we could prove that the religious belief of savage peoples was the earliest form of religion, this would not reduce the truth of higher religions to the level of this type of thought. A religion makes its appeal to the experience of those who hold it, and does not rest for its validity upon the theories which earlier peoples may have formed. These earlier views are no more explanations or justifications of present problems than the

savage's view of a thunderstorm is a part of the modern theory of electricity. Without discussing what the validity of any particular religion consists in, it is enough to point out that the evolution of religions and of moral ideas shows a progress, not indeed always in one direction. A ritual system may become overlaid with magical beliefs, and conceptions of the divine may degenerate. But we do find the emergence of more and more adequate views, which are not dependent for their truth or value upon the fact that they may have been preceded by others more rudimentary.

In India we have a unique instance of the growth of a religion for three thousand years. We can trace different stages in the Veda itself—the simple belief in the divinity of the sun and the lightning, and the belief in beings who will grant favours and punish the wicked, as well as the tendency which later became the doctrine that all these powers are manifestations of one ultimate reality.

The word Veda means "knowledge." It is the general name given by the Hindus to four collections of religious works, which contain the sacred knowledge necessary for the performance by the priests of the rites of the brahmanical religion. Each Veda consists of two parts, *mantra* or hymns, and *brāhmaṇa*, extensive compositions mainly in prose, containing interpreta-

tions of the hymns and dealing with the ritual of the sacrifice. There are several recensions of each Veda, known as "branches," and many more must have existed, which grew up in different priestly schools. The term Veda as used by Western scholars is usually applied to the hymns alone, which are certainly far earlier in date than the Brāhmaṇas that accompany them. The four collections of hymns are the Rigveda, "the Veda of verses," the Sāmaveda, "the Veda of melodies," the Yajurveda, "the Veda of sacrifice," and the Atharvaveda, "the Veda of the Atharvan priests." Of these the Rigveda is the largest and most important. In the Sāmaveda the hymns are arranged for chanting at the Soma sacrifice, and most of the verses are found in the Rigveda. The Yajurveda represents a later stage, and contains besides hymns sacrificial prose formulas. The Atharvaveda is devoted chiefly to magical hymns and spells for obtaining good luck, healing diseases, and warding off the attacks of demons. In its present form it is later than the Rigveda, but much of its substance is very old. It is true that we often find the three Vedas mentioned, while the Atharvaveda is ignored; but this only shows that for long it was not recognised as a Veda by the three other schools, to which the performance of the regular sacrifices belonged.

The Veda is held to be eternal. The sages to

whom the hymns are ascribed are the revealers. They are said to have " seen " the hymns directly, and they are " seers " in the literal sense.

This literature extending over centuries has given rise to many problems and theories which are far from being finally settled. The present work is confined to a selection of hymns from the Rigveda, and especially to those which illustrate the religious ideas and theological beliefs of the Indian people from the earliest period at which they can be traced.[1] The hymns of the Rigveda are 1,028 in number, arranged in ten books. Most of them are addressed to gods or groups of gods, but there are others, especially in the tenth book, of a narrative or dramatic character, as well as spells, some of which recur in the Atharvaveda, and marriage and burial hymns. Much of the tenth book evidently belongs to the latest stage of the Vedic period. The ancient language, usually called Vedic Sanskrit, is in a different dialect from that which at least since the third century B.C. has been the classical language of India, and which is properly known as Sanskrit, i.e. " polished, adorned."

The determination of the age of the Rigveda rests upon sufficiently elastic calculations. The

[1] These have been rendered in prose, except Hymns XIII and LIV. A metrical version tends to disguise the difficult passages, and, except in the case of *trishtubh* metre (eleven syllables), gives no impression of the æsthetic effect of the originals.

earliest Brāhmaṇas being pre-buddhistic are put at 800–600 B.C., and the fact that in them the texts of the hymns were beginning to be misunderstood, and that their language shows a later stage, has led to the generally held conclusion that 1000 B.C. is a minimum date for the close of the Rigveda period, during which the hymns were composed. The preceding millennium would cover the growth of the period, but Mr. B. G. Tilak and Professor Jacobi on astronomical grounds have independently sought to place them 2,000 years earlier than the period usually accepted. The conclusions of these scholars have not won general acceptance, but they show on what very hypothetical considerations the question still rests.

Another problem is raised by the fact that Sanskrit belongs to the family of languages called Indo-European. It is descended with Greek, Latin, Persian, the Keltic, Germanic, Slavonic and some other groups, from one original language, spoken by a people settled somewhere in Europe.[1] We cannot infer that all the present speakers are descendants of this people. That involves a yet unsolved anthropological question, though this fact was not clearly recognised by early investigators. Partly owing to this confusion it was

[1] The latest investigations by Dr. P. Giles place this people in the districts extending from Bohemia along the south of the Carpathians to the Balkans.

further assumed that the Vedic hymns take us back very nearly to the culture of the undivided Indo-European period, and that it is consequently possible to see the development both of language and religion almost from their origins.

The question now admits of being more exactly stated. The geographical references in the hymns show that their authors were settled in India, in the district of the five rivers, the Sindhu (Indus) and its tributaries ; and the close resemblance of their language to that of the ancient Persians implies that both peoples must once have lived together in Iran. The first problem is to determine how the hymns were understood by the Hindus themselves. As such they are not primitive, nor even if we could infer from them what was the religion of the early Indo-Europeans, should we have any reason to think that we had reached the beginnings of religion. Both from archæology and linguistics we can infer that there were earlier ages of human culture with forms of language far anterior to the formation of the Indo-European group. The primary interest of the Vedic hymns is in giving us an actual picture of the religious ideas of the early Hindus, but they are also invaluable documents in showing how various religious notions have developed and have been transformed ; and their very complexity is a safeguard against the

tendency to be satisfied with a too simple *a priori* theory of the origin or origins of religion.

One theory is that religion arose from the worship of deceased ancestors. This is usually held to be more convincing than the theory of nature worship, in that it gives a reason why man as a fact came to believe in divine or superhuman beings. But in the Veda we do find nature worship as a real living religion, and no theory of the origin of religion can ignore it. It is of course no explanation to say that man "personified" the powers of nature. This is to assume that he started with our distinction of the personal and non-personal. In the hymns themselves we frequently find the wider distinction of "that which moves and that which moves not." Personification is no explanation of the origin of gods. When the belief in gods already exists, the personification and deification of an abstraction is easy, as in the case of Speech (Hymn XL), but it does not tell us how man came to believe in the superhuman or divine. It is now usual to call early man animistic, and it is certain that he had not our views of what is alive and what not. Yet it does not follow that he supposed that the objects of his fear or wonder were animated by spirits behind them. When fire came forth from the wood and fire-drill, he saw something that moved and actually ate the sacrifice offered. To the worshipper it was a kindly or

angry being that needed no personifying. The great light that moved across the sky, the lightning from the storm-cloud, the beneficent springs and rivers, were actual mighty beings, not the mere symbols of beings who controlled them. The Soma sacrifice itself, with the ritual of which the hymns are chiefly connected, is an important instance of this stage of belief.[1] This mode of thought is frequent enough in the Veda, and is sufficient to explain why it contains no references to images. The actual gods needed no symbols.

This type of nature worship would be as adequate an explanation of the belief in gods as the theory of ancestor worship, if we had not good reason for holding that religion had existed for ages previously. But besides this it does not explain all that we find in the Veda. Ancestor worship is there also. These ancestors are the Fathers, who receive special offerings, and who dwell in a special heaven. One form of the ancestor-worship theory is the old and discredited theory of Euhemerus of the age of Alexander, according to whom the gods are deified heroes. It is discredited because it tried to account for everything, but yet there are some features which it explains. We do find deified heroes in the Veda. Yama, king of the dead, is said to have

[1] The *soma* was a plant, said to grow on mountains. Its identity is now unknown. The stems were pressed, and the juice mixed with honey or milk formed an intoxicating drink, which was offered to the gods and drunk by the worshippers.

been the first man. The Aśvins, the gods who bestow honey and heal diseases, were explained by some of the earliest commentators as two ancestral kings. This deification is intelligible when there is already a belief in gods. We find it actually taking place in Indian religion, when Kṛishṇa, the hero of the Yādava tribe, becomes identified with the Vedic god Vishṇu, and a whole mythology is invented for him. But this is not sufficient to explain how the belief in gods could arise, nor is it identical with the much more elementary belief that the dead in some form continue to exist. Even in Greece we see the worship of the dead and of Olympian deities, but the two classes are never confused. This distinction is equally clear in the Veda, and it presents a problem for the history of religion to solve.

The Veda speaks of ancient and modern sages, and the hymns themselves show developments in religious conceptions. Some of the gods cannot certainly be identified with natural phenomena. Even the earliest commentators are not agreed. This is not surprising when it is seen how mythological ideas are constantly changing and developing. Mythology is one of early man's attempts at natural science, the wish to have an explanation for natural events, or to give a meaning to some ceremony. It is an addition both to belief and to ritual. The first

investigators sought to find a common stock of myths among the Indo-European peoples, but not one has survived. Even of the gods themselves only one, Dyaus, the Greek Zeus, can be identified with certainty. The Veda itself and the whole history of Indian religions show that mythology is not a permanent groundwork of belief, but that it is in constant evolution. In the Veda it develops on one hand into the philosophical hymns, which evidently find the older myths inadequate, and in the popular religion it evolves a system of new gods and myths, in which the older deities are almost forgotten. Indra, the most prominent deity in the Veda, with a rich mythology, has been explained as a thunder god. He slays the serpent and lets loose the cows, but he is so far removed from the natural phenomenon that scholars are not agreed whether the myth of releasing the cows refers to the clouds that pour down rain, or to the rivers set free from the demon of frost. The question is further complicated by the fact that we are not dealing with one united community, but with a number of tribes in which special cults probably developed, leading to duplications and subsequent identifications of similar divinities.

It is possible to trace the Vedic religion back to a pre-Indian stage. The Indian and ancient Persian languages are so closely related that the two peoples are held to have once formed one

community in Iran, this being the Indo-Iranian or Aryan stage. This is also indicated by the fact that Indian *soma* corresponds to Avestan *haoma*, the god Mitra to Mithra, and that there is a number of other identical religious terms.[1] One of these is *asura*, meaning "god" in the Veda, Avestan *ahura*, as seen in the Avestan *Ahura-mazda*. The Indian deity who shows most relationship in character to the righteous Ahura-mazda is Varuṇa. He is a god whose moral characteristics are emphasised in a way very unlike any of the others. To him the worshipper confesses his sins, and recognises him as the upholder of the universe. The hymns to him in their elevation remind us of the Psalms of David. There is nothing in the Veda to identify him with a natural phenomenon, but he regulates the seasons and the waters, and in later mythology becomes a water-god.

This peculiar feature of Varuṇa raises a question important for the history of any religion—that of borrowing. Oldenberg has ascribed Varuṇa's special character to his having been taken over from a Semitic people, and the later discovery of other ancient civilisations in Asia Minor has made the theory of borrowing still more probable, but this was not necessarily from the Semites.

[1] It is not often possible to make a close comparison with Persian religion, as the reform of Zoroaster overthrew the ancient nature worship and established a lofty monotheism, in which the devas appear as demons.

The most remarkable find has been the discovery of cuneiform tablets at Boghazkeui in Asia Minor, some ninety miles east of Angora, by Hugo Winckler in 1907. These tablets are treaties between the Hittite and Mitanni kings of the fourteenth century B.C. The Mitanni language is neither Semitic nor Aryan, but the tablets contain references to certain gods nearly identical with the names Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra, and the Nāsatyas (Aśvins). These are Vedic gods, and they must also have been Indo-Iranian, as the names have corresponding forms in Avestan. The discoverers took it for granted that the names were adopted into Mitanni from the Aryans, without even raising the question whether the Aryans were not the borrowers. If the names had had intelligible meanings in Sanskrit like the names of the Sky, the Dawn, and Fire, there would have been some reason for assuming an Aryan origin, but the meaning of these gods, as will be seen below, has always been a puzzle both to the ancient Hindus and to western scholars. Not one of the names has been explained from Sanskrit or any allied language, their significance as nature-gods is doubtful or unknown, and none of the gods, except perhaps the Nāsatyas, have any parallels among the Indo-European peoples other than the Indo-Iranians. These difficulties, the unexplained names, the disputed interpretations of

the gods, and the absence of such gods amongst any other Indo-European peoples, receive a much simpler explanation if we suppose the Indo-Iranians to be the borrowers.[1]

The hymns addressed to natural powers and beings evolved through mythological speculation, and to gods borrowed or inherited from still earlier forms of religion, form the bulk of the collection. Besides these we find other strata of thought—hymns to Ṛibhu and his two companions, skilful artificers resembling the elves, to tutelary deities such as Vāstoshpati, "lord of the house," Kshetrapati, "lord of the field," and a belief in demons or hostile beings of various kinds. The probability of borrowing from non-Aryan Indian tribes is here generally recognised. Magic also, the belief that by the performance of certain prescribed actions and the utterance of formulas some wished-for event will follow, is found in all the Vedas. Oldenberg has said that teaching and learning went on in a sacramental atmosphere saturated with magic, but still many of the hymns are real prayers, direct requests to a personal god asking him for protection and welfare. Yet as magic was certainly practised, it is easy to see, even in a hymn which glorifies the victory of Indra over the demon of drought, how it could come to be used magically. To

[1] Cf. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, i, p. viii; *The Cambridge History of India*, i. 72, 320.

assert that Indra is victorious is a spell, which accompanied by the appropriate action produces rain.

These are some of the elements that are found in the earliest religious thought of India. In the Veda itself we find a progress to monotheism, first in identifying one god with others, and finally expressed explicitly, not merely by the philosophers, but in the orthodox religious teaching, as by the great commentator Sāyaṇa, who explains the Vedic religion as the worship of the supreme Lord under the forms of Indra and the rest. It was in the Upanishads, the theological treatises appended to the Brāhmaṇas, that the doctrine of the absolute One was first definitely formulated; and in the teaching of a theologian and Vedāntist like Rāmānuja it has become the belief that "there is a supreme Person (*purusha*), utterly opposite to all evil, and one with the good; the cause of the origin, preservation, and dissolution of the world; who is entirely different from all else, all-knowing, who wills truth, who is the one ocean of affection for all those who resort to him, supremely merciful, beyond the possibility of aught being equal or superior to him, whose name is the highest Brahman." [1]

The Soma sacrifice is no longer celebrated ("it is not performed in this kalpa [age]," said a Brahmin to me), but the words of the Veda still

[1] Commentary on the Brahmasūtras, iv. 22.

enter into the daily worship, into the birth, wedding, burial, and other ceremonies, and every orthodox Hindu of the higher castes repeats on rising the prayer to the God Savitar :

> Upon that excellent glory
> Of the God Savitar may we meditate ;
> May he stimulate our thoughts.

NOTE.—The best account of what is actually known of Indo-European religion will be found in O. Schrader's *Aryan Religion* in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. Hillebrandt's *Vedische Mythologie* (kleine Ausg., Breslau, 1910) and Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology* (Strassburg, 1897) are the most useful for Indian beliefs, the latter giving full references. Dr. Barnett's *Hindu Gods and Heroes*, in the same series as the present volume, gives an account of the Vedic gods, and emphasises in particular the significance of hero-worship.

EDITORIAL NOTE

THE object of the Editors of this series is a very definite one. They desire above all things that, in their humble way, these books shall be the ambassadors of good-will and understanding between East and West—the old world of Thought and the new of Action. In this endeavour, and in their own sphere, they are but followers of the highest example in the land. They are confident that a deeper knowledge of the great ideals and lofty philosophy of Oriental thought may help to a revival of that true spirit of Charity which neither despises nor fears the nations of another creed and colour.

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VEDIC HYMNS
FROM THE RIGVEDA

I

TO AGNI, FIRE

The worship of fire as such is found only in the Indian and earliest Persian religions. The corresponding name for fire in Latin, *ignis*, has no religious significance, but the Roman Vesta, the goddess of the hearth, and the Greek Hestia, may point to a common origin in fire-worship. Agni is the messenger of the gods and brings them to the place of sacrifice, where they sit down upon the strewn grass. The sacrifice was not a communal ceremony, but was performed for one family or person. As a king had a chaplain or household priest (*purohita*), so Agni is the household priest of the gods and their Hotar (the priest who recites the prayers at the sacrifice). He is also called the protector of law (*ṛita*). This conception of law or ordinance, according to which everything in the universe, as in the sacrifice, follows a prescribed order, and is performed "duly," or according to a law, runs through the Veda. It is the idea of an order which the gods follow, and this later led the Sāṃkhya philosophy and Buddhism to dispense with the notion of an *īśvara*, a supreme Lord. The Angirases appear to have been an ancient priestly family chiefly connected with the fire-sacrifice, but in the Vedas they have become deified and have a special worship.

1. Agni I praise, the household priest, God and offerer of the sacrifice, the Hotar and best bestower of wealth.

2. Worthy of praises by seers of old time and by those of new, may Agni bring hither the Gods.

3. Through Agni may one win wealth and welfare day by day, honour most rich in heroes.

4. O Agni, the offering and sacrifice which thou on all sides encirclest goes verily among the Gods.

5. May Agni the Hotar, with sage's insight, truthful, whose fame is most loud, come hither a God with the Gods.

6. That good indeed which thou, Agni, wilt grant to thy worshipper, that good of thine is true, O Angiras.

7. To thee, O Agni, illuminator of the darkness, dayby day with prayer bringing worship we come;

8. To thee that rulest over the sacrifices, protector of Law, radiant one, increasing in thine own abode.

9. Be thou, as a father to a son, O Agni, easy of access to us. Abide with us for blessing.

II

TO AGNI

Fire was produced by the rubbing of the fire-sticks, and hence Agni is said to hide. There may be a reference here to the myth in the Yajurveda, according to which the three elder brothers of Agni, when bearing an oblation to the gods, disappeared, and Agni, being afraid, hid in the waters, where the gods (in this hymn called the sages) sought him out.

1. Thee, like a thief hiding with cattle in secret, who yokest worship, bearest worship, the

sages with one accord followed in thy traces. All the Gods sat down to worship thee.

2. The Gods followed the ordinances of Law. (Neither) heaven nor earth was a hindrance (to their search).[1] The waters make the infant grow with splendour, well-born in the bosom, the lap of Law.

3. Like cheering food, like a wide abode, like a mountain with its enjoyments, like a favouring flood, like a steed rushing on in his course, like a river in its flood—who will check him ?

4. A kinsman of the rivers, as a brother of his sisters, as a king devours the wealthy, he devours the forests. When driven by the wind he spreads through the forests, Agni shears the hair of the earth.

5. He hisses as a goose sitting in the waters, most famous by his will, rousing the dawn for the people. Like Soma, orderer of the sacrifice, born according to Law, as a cow with its young he extends, shining far abroad.

III

TO AGNI AND THE MARUTS

In the later ritual this hymn was one of those used as a rain-spell. A black horse facing west was placed on the east of the sacrifice, and the sacrificer rubbed it with a black cloth. If it neighed or acted in some other prescribed manner, he would know that it was going to rain. The fact

[1] Victor Henry's interpretation of this disputed line.

that the hymn is addressed to the storm-gods is enough to show why it was thus applied, and this purpose is also seen in Sāyaṇa, who makes both "space" and "song" mean "water," and interprets "mountains" as "clouds," a sense common in the Brāhmaṇas in the explanations of the Indra legends.

1. To this fair sacrifice for the draught of milk thou art invoked. With the Maruts come, O Agni.

2. No God nor mortal surpasses thy might, O great one. With the Maruts come, O Agni.

3. They that know the great space, the All-gods that harm not. With the Maruts come, O Agni.

4. The fierce ones who sing their song, through their force unassailable. With the Maruts come, O Agni.

5. The brilliant ones, of awful form, of fair sovereignty, devouring their foes. With the Maruts come, O Agni.

6. The Gods who sit in the light of the firmament, in heaven. With the Maruts come, O Agni.

7. Who shake the mountains across the billowy sea. With the Maruts come, O Agni.

8. Who with their rays spread across the ocean through their force. With the Maruts come, O Agni.

9. For thee to drink first I pour out the sweet draught of Soma. With the Maruts come, O Agni.

IV

TO USHAS, THE DAWN

The hymns to Ushas are the most poetical in the Veda in their descriptions of the beauty of the dawn. The name Ushas is related to the Greek Eos and the Latin Aurora, but the Latin mythology is a mere copying of the Greek. She has been identified with the Old English Eostre, whose name partly corresponds, not to the Sanskrit *Ushas*, but to *usrā*, "red." All we really know of Eostre is that Bede says she was a goddess formerly worshipped in April (Eosturmonath), but it is impossible to tell whether Bede had any actual knowledge of some pagan practice or whether he was making a guess.

1. The Dawn born in the Sky has revealed herself duly, and has come manifesting her majesty. She has uncovered hostile things and hateful darkness. She, the best of Angirases, has wakened the paths.

2. Be with us to-day for our great welfare; O Dawn, grant us great prosperity. Bring us varied splendid wealth glorious among men, O divine lady.

3. These rays of the Dawn, bright, varied, immortal, have come producing the divine ordinances; filling the spaces they have spread abroad.

4. Yoking her horses from afar she straightway goes round among the five tribes, looking down on the ways of men, daughter of the Sky, mistress of the world.

5. With swift horses the wife of the Sun with

manifold gifts is sovereign over wealth and riches. Praised by sages the bounteous one makes us grow old ; the Dawn shines lauded by the oblation-bringers.

6. The red spotted horses have appeared bringing the gleaming Dawn. Shining she goes on her chariot that is bedecked with all adornments ; she bestows treasure on the man that serves her.

7. True with the true, great with the great, a Goddess with the Gods, worshipped with the worshipful, breaking down the strong places, giving kine—the cows are eager for the Dawn.

8. Give us treasure of cattle, of heroes, O Dawn, treasure of horses that nourishes many. Make not our altar-grass a reproach among men. Ye Gods, protect us ever with blessings.

V

TO THE DAWN

1. This light, best of lights, has come. The brilliant shining forerunner has been born. As Night is impelled according to the impulse of Savitar (the Sun), so has she abandoned her seat for the Dawn.

2. With her bright offspring [1] the bright one gleaming has come, and the dark one has abandoned her dwelling. Of the same race, immortal,

[1] Lit. "calf," i.e. Agni, the fire of the sacrifice.

following one another, both heavens (Dawn and Night) move blotting out each other's colour.

3. Common is the path of the two sisters, unending. One after another they traverse it, instructed by the Gods. They quarrel not, they stay not, firmly established, Night and Dawn, of one mind, of different hues.

4. The shining bringer of youthful vigours has appeared. The brilliant one has opened our doors. Rousing the world she has discovered for us wealth. The Dawn has awakened all living things.

5. The generous one, that he who lies down may go, one to his enjoyment, one to his desire, another to wealth, that those who behold little may see widely, the Dawn has awakened all living things.

6. That one may win rule, another fame, another his desire, another achieve his end, to behold their different livelihoods the Dawn has awakened all living things.

7. She, the daughter of the sky, has appeared shining afar, the young maid in white robes. Ruling over all earthly treasure, O Dawn, here to-day, auspicious one, shine afar.

8. She follows the course of the Dawns that have passed away, she the first of the endless Dawns to come. Shining afar, rousing up the living, the Dawn awakens none that is dead.

9. As thou, O Dawn, hast put Agni in the kindling-wood, as thou hast shone forth with the light of Sūrya, as thou hast awakened men to

offer sacrifice, so hast thou procured among the Gods fair wealth.

10. How long (has this been)? While she abides between those that have shone and those that shine now, she longs desirous for the former ones, looking forward with joy she goes with the others.

11. Those mortals are gone, who beheld the former Dawn shining afar. Now has she come to our sight. They are coming who shall behold in future times.

12. Removing foes, protector of Law, born from Law, kindly one, stirring youthful vigours, auspicious one, bearing food for the Gods, here to-day, O Dawn, most excellent one, shine afar.

13. Endlessly from of old the Dawn, the Goddess, has shone afar. To-day has gleamed afar the generous one. So will she shine upon days to come. Ageless and immortal she goes on in her own wont.

14. With unguents at the threshold of the day she has beamed forth. The Goddess has thrown aside the robe of darkness. Awakening (the world), with ruddy horses the Dawn comes with well-yoked chariot.

15. Bringing prosperity and riches, showing herself she raises her brilliant banner, last of the endless Dawns that have passed away, first of the shining ones (to come) the Dawn has beamed forth.

16. Rise up. Living life has come to us. The dark has passed away. The light comes. She has abandoned the path for the sun to go. We have come where men prolong their life.

17. With the rein (of speech) the singer on the car raises hymns, praising the far-beaming Dawns. Shine then to-day on the singer, O generous one. Beaming down upon us grant us life with offspring.

18. The Dawns bounteous in kine, in offspring of men-children, who shine afar on the pious mortal, when his hymns have raised youthful vigours (refreshing) as the wind, those Dawns that bestow horses may the Soma-presser win.

19. Mother of Gods, the face of Aditi, the banner of sacrifice, O great one, beam forth. Bestowing renown on the prayer, shine afar upon us. Make us to be fruitful among the people, bestower of all blessings.

20. The brilliant wealth that the Dawns bring to the devout one, who worships auspiciously, may Mitra and Varuṇa grant us, and Aditi, Sindhu, Earth, and Heaven.

VI

TO NIGHT

Night, the sister of Dawn, is the goddess of the starlit sky, and is elsewhere called "with fair lights," in contrast to the black darkness. She is addressed separately only in this hymn. Hillebrandt mentions that in the Aitareya

Āraṇyaka (the "forest-treatise" forming part of the Brāhmaṇa of the Rigveda) this hymn is prescribed for driving away bad dreams.

1. Night, the Goddess, has come and gazed with her eyes in many places. All her adornment has she put on.

2. The Immortal has filled the wide space, the valleys, and the heights. With her light she drives back the darkness.

3. The Goddess has come and relieved (from her post) her sister Dawn, and the darkness hastens away.

4. To-day (thou appearest), at whose coming we have gone home, like birds to their nest on a tree.

5. Home have come the villages, the footed creatures and the birds, home have come even the greedy falcons.

6. Ward off the she-wolf and the wolf, ward off the thief, O flickering [1] Night. So be thou easy for us to pass through.

7. The darkness bedecking itself, black and anointed, has approached me. O Dawn, remove it like debts.

8. To thee I have driven (this hymn) like oxen. Choose it, O Night, daughter of heaven, like a hymn of praise to a victor.

[1] Lit., moving like waves.

VII

TO THE AŚVINS

Unlike the Dawn and Fire the Aśvins, "the twin horsemen," represent no natural phenomenon. If they ever did so, the connection has been quite lost. Modern scholars have explained them as the morning and evening twilight, the sun and moon, the morning star, and the two stars of Gemini. The Indian commentators are quite as undecided, and, besides other explanations, mention the view that they were "two kings of virtuous deeds," i.e. deceased heroes. But such a view might naturally arise out of the legends of their aid to persons in distress, and some of these at least are evidently accretions.

1. Agni has awakened from the earth; the Sun rises. The mighty shining Dawn has shone abroad with her brightness. The two Aśvins have yoked for the course their chariot. The God Savitar has stimulated living beings on every side.

2. When ye, O Aśvins, yoke your strong chariot, sprinkle our possessions with sweet butter. Make our spell (*brahma*) victorious in the battles. May we share wealth in the heroes' conquests.

3. May the Aśvins' three-wheeled chariot with swift horses bearing honey come hither well praised, with three seats, bounteous, enclosing all wealth; may it bring us blessing to the two-footed and to the four-footed.

4. O Aśvins, bring us nourishment, sprinkle us with your honey-dripping lash; prolong our

life, blot out our sicknesses, drive away the enemy, be nigh to us.

5. Ye place the germ in female creatures, ye place it within all beings; the fire, O Aśvins, mighty ones, ye set in motion, the waters and the forest trees.

6. Ye are physicians with your remedies, and charioteers with your chariot-skill; ye also, strong ones, bestow lordship on him who with a sacrifice honours you in his heart.

VIII

TO THE AŚVINS

Even if the Aśvins once represented a natural phenomenon it is not surprising that the Indian poets should have added other features when the connection was forgotten. The two gods have several characteristics in common with Castor and Pollux. They are twins and horsemen and the sons of Dyaus, as the Dioscuri are the sons of Zeus (though in Homer they have a human father). They are associated with Sūryā, as the Greek gods are with their sister Helen. In both cases they are saving gods and assist the shipwrecked. It is quite clear as regards the Greek gods that legends which may once have applied to real persons have become attached to older divinities, and the similar features of the Indian legends show how it would be natural to explain the Aśvins as two ancestral kings. If we get rid of the idea that religion began with the "Aryans," there is no reason why they should not be pre-Indo-European, or borrowed in early times from another religion.

1. Come, bright Aśvins with fair horses, accept, O wonder-working ones, the hymn of your

worshipper, and partake of the oblations that we offer.

2. The intoxicating plants (Soma) have been set before you. Draw nigh to enjoy my offering. Across the invocations of our foe listen to us.

3. Your chariot presses forward as swift as thought across the spaces of air, O Aśvins, laden with a hundred blessings, coming to us, O ye who have Sūryā as your treasure.

4. When this stone that goes to the Gods, raised aloft, sounds as it presses for you the Soma, may the priest, O fair ones, draw you hither with the oblations.

5. Brilliant is the boon that is yours. Ye freed Atri from the cave, who received refreshment, being dear to you.[1]

6. That too, O Aśvins, was your doing, when ye returned to the aged Chyavāna as he offered oblations, and granted him a youthful body.

7. Bhujyu too, O Aśvins, when evil-natured friends abandoned him in the midst of the ocean, did an enemy save, him who was your friend.

8. To Vṛika, when he was wearied, ye gave strength, and being invoked ye heard Śayu. Ye

[1] This is the meaning that Sāyaṇa gives it, against the grammar, but his interpretation is a real Vedic legend, mentioned in the next hymn. Bergaigne reads *máhishīvat* for *máhishvantam*, and makes it mean "ye gave Atri the boon of a wife." Atri, Bhujyu, and the other persons in this and the following hymn are protégés of the Aśvins, but we have no reason to believe that the legends about them in the commentaries give really historical information.

filled the cow with milk like as with water, and endowed the barren one, O Aśvins, with your strength.

9. This singer praises you with hymns, waking before the dawn, glad at heart. May the cow nourish him with food and milk. Ye Gods, protect us ever with blessings.

IX

TO THE ASVINS

This hymn is ascribed to Ghoshā, daughter of king Kakshīvat. The attribution is no doubt purely legendary, but the pronoun in v. 6 implies that a woman is the speaker. This indicates that women took a more active part in religious ceremonies in Vedic times than later. In one of the Soma-hymns husband and wife together press the Soma, but in the Law-book of Manu women are mentioned among those whose sacrificing is displeasing to the gods, and if women perform the Agnihotra fire-offering they fall into hell.

1. This car of yours moving on, O Aśvins, well-rolling, to be invoked at dusk and dawn by the oblation-bearer, like the easily invoked name of a father, again and again we invoke.

2. Inspire vigours, make our devotions flow abundant, rouse liberalities. For this we are eager. Make our portion glorious, O Aśvins, pleasant as Soma make it among the bountiful.

3. Ye are the welfare of her that grows old at home, protectors of the slow one, of him that is last. O Nāsatyas, they call you healers of the blind, the lean, and the broken.

4. Ye fashioned the aged Chyavāna young again, like a chariot for its course. (Bhujyu) the son of Tugra ye drew out above the waters. Praised be all these your deeds at the Soma-pressings.

5. Your ancient heroic deeds will I tell out among the people. Ye were in truth physicians bringing weal. You praiseworthy ones will we win for our aid, so that this enemy, O Nāsatyas, may believe.

6. I have called to you, hear me, O Aśvins. Be willing to help me, even as father and mother their son. Without friends, without relatives or kin, poor am I. Save me from this curse.

7. Ye bore in your chariot to Vimada Śundhyū, the daughter of Purumitra. Ye came at the calling of the wife with the impotent husband. Ye granted good progeny to Purandhi.[1]

8. To the wise Kali, who was nearing old age, ye gave youth again. Ye raised Vandana from the deer-pit, ye straightway made Viśpalā to move.[2]

9. Ye, O Bulls, drew Rebha out of the cave, who was dying, O Aśvins; and ye made the heated abyss pleasant to Atri, to Saptavadhri.

10. O Aśvins, ye bestowed on Pedu a white horse, strong with ninety-nine gifts of strength,

[1] The name means bounteous, and may be an epithet of the wife.

[2] By giving her an iron leg, when she had lost her own in battle.

praiseworthy, speeding his companion, like wealth to be invoked for men, the bringer of weal.

11. O kings, O Aditi, no whence comes distress or danger or fear upon him whose chariot, O well-invoked Aśvins that go on shining paths, ye make to go in front with your consort.

12. Come ye with that chariot swifter than thought, which the Ṛibhus wrought for you, O Aśvins; at the yoking of which the daughter of the Sky (Dawn) is born, and the two bright ones, Night and Day, are born from Vivasvant.

13. Come to our abode, victorious ones, over the mountain. Ye made the cow rich with milk for Sayu, O Aśvins. From within the wolf's mouth through your power ye freed the swallowed quail.[1]

14. This hymn of praise we have made for you, O Aśvins; we have wrought it as the Bhṛigus a car; we have decked it as a maid for her husband, establishing it as a true son that continues his family.

X

TO SŪRYA, THE SUN

Sūrya is the name of the actual sun, but Savitar, Vishṇu, Pūshan, Indra, Mitra, and Yama have also been identified with the sun. These are discussed below. A more curious fact is the apparent absence of any Vedic Moon-god. See the hymns to Soma.

1. The shining face of the Gods has risen, the

[1] "Wolf" (*vṛika*) and "quail" (*vartikā*) are possibly proper names.

eye of Mitra, Varuṇa, and Agni. Sūrya, the self of that which moves and stands, has filled heaven and earth and the middle sky.

2. Sūrya follows the Goddess Dawn, the shining one, as a wooer after a maiden, where godly men spread out their yokes [1] auspiciously for the auspicious one.

3. Auspicious are the yellow horses of Sūrya, bright, swift, worthy of praises. Bowing they mount the back of the sky, round heaven and earth they go quickly.

4. This is the godhead of Sūrya, this his greatness: while yet it was forming, he drew together the web (of darkness). When he has yoked the yellow horses from their station, Night is then spreading her garment over all.

5. Then for a light to Mitra and Varuṇa Sūrya puts his form in the lap of the sky. Endlessly his yellow horses bring now clear brightness, now darkness.

6. To-day, O Gods, at the rising of Sūrya help us out of distress, out of blame. This may Mitra, Varuṇa, Aditi, Sindhu, Earth, and Heaven grant us.

[1] I.e. set up the sacrifices (Hillebrandt). The same verb is used of the primeval sacrifice in Hymn LVIII.

XI

TO VISHṆU

Vishṇu is chiefly known for his three strides. The traditional view is that this means the course of the sun through the three regions of earth, air, and heaven. Another very ancient view is that it refers to the sun's rising, culminating, and setting; but this would not explain the reference to Vishṇu's highest step. To say that Vishṇu is the sun as the personified swiftly moving luminary, which with vast strides traverses the whole universe, does not explain why two Sun-gods should have been invented. This description fits Sūrya equally well, but it is quite intelligible that the worship of the sun may in some clan have taken a special form, which spread and was adopted by others. Though unimportant in the Veda, Vishṇu becomes later the manifestation of the supreme god as preserver of the world.[1]

1. Now will I declare the heroic deeds of Vishṇu, who has measured out the spaces of the earth, who established the upper abode, striding thrice, the wide-going one.

2. Therefore Vishṇu is praised for his heroic power, like a terrible beast, wandering at will, haunting the mountains, in whose three wide steps all beings dwell.

3. To Vishṇu let my sounding hymn go forth, to the mountain-dwelling wide-going bull, who

[1] In too many cases the mythologists offer us merely "probable" alternative guesses. But here Prof. Bloomfield is quite certain that "Vishṇu represents the sun in his ascent from the horizon of the earth, through the atmosphere to the zenith." Dr. Barnett is equally certain that "Vishṇu is *not* the sun." He was "originally nothing more or less than the embodied spirit of the sacrificial rites."

alone measured out this long far-extended abode with but three steps.

4. Whose three steps filled with sweetness unperishing exult in bliss; who alone in threefold manner has supported earth, the sky, and all beings.

5. May I attain to that his dear place, where men devoted to the Gods are exulting; for that verily is akin to the wide-stepper, in the highest step of Vishṇu a well of sweetness.

6. To those dwellings of you two (Indra and Vishṇu) we yearn to attain, where are the many-horned swift cattle. There verily that highest step of the wide-going Bull[1] shines down brightly.

XII

TO SAVITAR

The name Savitar means "stimulator." It is a purely Indian term, and the god is probably also of Indian origin. He comes to be a form of the Sun-god, but in a few cases the two are distinguished. In the present hymn he is, like Agni, described as a divine sacrificer, through whose activity the whole world is set going, and several of his epithets (golden-tongued, god of the dwelling) specially belong to Agni. "God Savitar" may equally well mean "the stimulator god," and it is possibly from being a god of stimulation that he has come to be identified with the Sun.

1. The God Savitar of mighty will has stretched out his golden arms for stimulating (the world). The youthful, skilful sacrificer sprinkles his

[1] A frequent epithet of various gods as typical of virility.

hands with ghee as he separates the realm of space.

2. May we share in the excellent stimulation of the God Savitar and in his bestowal of wealth, who art for the rest and activity of every two-footed and four-footed being.

3. With infallible gracious protections, O Savitar, do thou to-day surround our dwelling. Do thou, golden-tongued, protect us for our latest journeying. May no magician have power over us.

4. The God Savitar, God of the dwelling, golden-handed, has arisen at evening. The bronze-jawed, the worshipful, with winning tongue procures for his worshipper abundant wealth.

5. Like a priest in blessing Savitar has stretched out his beautiful golden arms. He has mounted the heights of heaven and earth. He has checked and overthrown all fearful evil.

6. Wealth to-day, O Savitar, wealth to-morrow, wealth day by day procure us. Lord of much wealth art thou ; through this prayer may we attain to wealth.

XIII

TO INDRA

Indra is the God most frequently celebrated in the Veda. The traditional view is that he is a god who brings rain. His chief feat is the slaying of the demon Vṛitra and letting loose the waters. This to the people in the plains of India undoubtedly referred to the coming of rain and the victory over drought. In the Brāhmaṇas the mountains that are

split open by Indra are explained as clouds, but, as will be seen from this hymn, there is no mention of rain. The description fits much better the letting loose of the streams after being imprisoned by frost. Hence Hillebrandt holds that at the time when the Vedic peoples inhabited a colder region, Indra must have been a Sun-god who melts the frost on the approach of spring. Indra is especially celebrated as drinking the Soma at the midday pressing, and as god of battle is invoked for victory. Maghavan, "the generous," is his special epithet. This hymn and No. LIV have been rendered approximately in the metre of the original.

1. Now will I tell the heroic deeds of Indra, which with his thunderbolt he wrought aforetime. He slew the Serpent, and boring for the waters he split asunder the bellies of the mountains.

2. He slew the Serpent that rested on the mountain. Tvashṭar [1] for him hath wrought a sounding weapon; and like as lowing oxen, quickly flowing swift to the ocean down have sped the waters.

3. Eagerly for his share he chose the Soma. In the three Soma-bowls he quaffed the juices. Maghavan seized upon his whirling weapon, and slew the eldest first-born of the serpents.

4. When thou didst slay the first-born of the serpents, the wiles of the wily ones, thy foes, destroying, the Sun, Sky, Dawn, thou didst beget, O Indra. Then verily no enemy thou foundest.

5. Vṛitra he slew, Vyaṃsa, a more than Vṛitra, slew with his thunderbolt, the mighty

[1] The artificer of the Gods.

weapon ; crushed with his axe like branches into fragments. Along the earth low-crouching lay the Serpent.

6. As one that fights not, Vṛitra madly challenged the onrushing mighty hero, bane to many. Surviving not the clashing of the weapons, he crushed the breaches [1]—he whose foe was Indra.

7. Footless and handless did he fight with Indra ; upon his back then Indra smote his weapon. The eunuch sought to match his manly vigour. In many a place lay Vṛitra widely shattered.

8. Him, like an ox thus crushed and broken lying, the waters boldly rise and overpower, which Vṛitra through his might had held in prison. Low at their feet lay overcome the Serpent.

9. Of Vṛitra's mother was the strength exhausted. Indra his deadly bolt bore down upon her. The mother was above, the son was under ; as with its calf a cow, so lay the demon.

10. Down in the midst of the unsettled restless water-courses was Vṛitra's body lying. The waters overwhelm the hidden body ; in the long dark he lay, the foe of Indra.

11. The waters demon-lorded, serpent-guarded, abode shut in, as oxen by a Paṇi.[2] When in their

[1] Perhaps meaning that he fell and crushed the mountain-rifts, but it is quite doubtful. Sāyaṇa says "rivers."

[2] The Paṇis were demons, mentioned as stealing cows ; see Hymn XVI. They may have originally been a predatory non-Aryan tribe.

hollow cleft they were encompassed, then did he slaughter Vṛitra and unclose it.

12. A horse's tail thou didst become, O Indra, when, only God, he struck back at thy missile. O Indra, thou didst win the kine, the Soma, thou lettest loose to flow the seven rivers.

13. Nought booted him the lightning, nought the thunder, nought mist and hail, which widely he did scatter. When Indra and the Serpent fought together, then ever since Maghavan was victorious.

14. What champion of the Serpent saw'st thou, Indra, that fear came on thy heart for having slain him, that nine and ninety rivers thou o'erpassedst, like as a frightened hawk the airy spaces ?

15. Armed with the thunderbolt a king is Indra of that which goes, that rests, of horned and harmless. As king he rules the peoples, and embraces mankind, as spokes are compassed by the felly.

XIV

TO INDRA

1. The God, who as soon as born, the first endowed with spirit, who with his power protected the Gods ; at whose might, at the greatness of whose virility, the two worlds were terrified —he, O men, is Indra.

2. Who fixed the shaking Earth, who made firm the trembling mountains; who spread out wide the air, who established the Heaven—he, O men, is Indra.

3. Who smote the Serpent, and made the seven rivers to flow, who drove out the cattle from the cave of Vala [1]; who begat Fire between two stones, the spoiler in battles—he, O men, is Indra.

4. By whom all these beings were made to move, who made subject the Dāsa [2] colour; who like a gambler winning a stake laid hold of the enemy's wealth—he, O men, is Indra.

5. The terrible one, of whom they ask, "Where is he?" and say of him, "He is not"; he brings to nought the treasure of the foe, like (a gambler's) stake, believe ye in him—he, O men, is Indra.

6. Who is the furtherer of the rich, of the poor, of the brahman-priest, the singer, seeking refuge; who, the mighty-jawed, helps the soma-presser that has prepared the soma-stones—he, O men, is Indra.

7. In whose command are the horses, the cattle, the villages, and all the chariots; who begot the Sun and the Dawn, who is the leader of the Waters—he, O men, is Indra.

[1] The demon who hid the cattle. Śambara and Rauhiṇa, below, are other demons.

[2] The Dāsas and Dasyus were the black non-Aryans. Sāyaṇa understands Śūdras or demons (asuras).

8. Whom the two battle-ranks meeting in conflict invoke, vanguard and rearguard, both the enemies; mounting the same chariot (of Indra) they utter various invocations—he, O men, is Indra.

9. Without whom men do not conquer, whom in battle they invoke for help; who is the pattern for all, who is the shaker of the unshaken—he, O men, is Indra.

10. Who slew with his bolt many who wrought great evil, while they thought not of it; who yields not at the boldness of the bold, who is the slayer of the Dasyu—he, O men, is Indra.

11. Who in the fortieth autumn found out Sambara dwelling in the mountains; who slew the serpent that boasted of his strength, the demon lying (in his lair)—he, O men, is Indra.

12. Who, the mighty Bull with seven reins, let loose to flow the seven rivers; who with thunderbolt on his arm slew Rauhiṇa as he was climbing heaven—he, O men, is Indra.

13. Heaven and Earth bow before him, the mountains are in fear for his might; who is known as the soma-drinker, with thunderbolt on his arm, with thunderbolt in his hand—he, O men, is Indra.

14. Who aids the presser of the Soma, the cooker, the singer, the server, with his help; whose strengthening is the Brahma (prayer), the soma, and this offering—he, O men, is Indra.

15. Thou irresistible one, who providest booty for him that presses, for him that cooks, thou verily art true; may we, O Indra, at all times thy friends, with goodly offspring, praise thee in the assembly.

XV

SONG OF INDRA

1. Thus indeed, thus is my mind: kine and horses will I win. Have I not drunk of the Soma?

2. Like the roaring winds the draughts of Soma have roused me up. Have I not drunk of the Soma?

3. The draughts have roused me up, as swift horses a chariot. Have I not drunk of the Soma?

4. The hymn has drawn nigh to me, as a lowing cow to her dear calf. Have I not drunk of the Soma?

5. As a carpenter (making) a seat for the chariot, round my heart I bend the hymn. Have I not drunk of the Soma?

6. In no wise are the five peoples[1] aught to me. Have I not drunk of the Soma?

7. Not the half part of me are both the two worlds (Heaven and Earth). Have I not drunk of the Soma?

[1] Who the five peoples were is not known, probably five tribes among the Vedic Indians. The commentators say the four castes and the nishādas (barbarians), but give as alternative the gods, men, gandharvas (heavenly musicians), nāgas (serpent-demons), and the Fathers.

8. The Heaven I have overpassed in greatness and this great Earth. Have I not drunk of the Soma ?

9. Lo ! I will put down this Earth here or yonder. Have I not drunk of the Soma ?

10. Swiftly will I smite the Earth here or yonder. Have I not drunk of the Soma ?

11. In Heaven is one half of me. Down below I have drawn the other. Have I not drunk of the Soma ?

12. I am most mighty. Nigh to the clouds have I risen. Have I not drunk of the Soma ?

13. I go into the house (of him) that is ready. To the Gods goes the oblation-bearer (Agni). Have I not drunk of the Soma ?

XVI

SARAMĀ AND THE PAṆIS

Saramā, Indra's messenger, is sent to the Paṇis (see Hymn XIII) to recover the cattle they have stolen. In later mythology Saramā is the divine bitch. There is nothing to indicate this in the Veda, but Yama's two dogs (Hymn LIV) are called the hounds of Saramā. If this myth rests on a natural phenomenon, the meaning has been lost. Saramā has been interpreted as the wind that precedes the Storm-god Indra, and the comparative mythologists have even made her a Dawn-goddess, and have identified her story with that of Helen of Troy, or have made both stories forms of the same myth.

1. (*Paṇis*) Seeking what came Saramā hither ? For far out of the way leads the path. What is

thy commission for us ? What was thy wandering ? How didst thou cross the waters of the Rasā [1] ?

2. (*Saramā*) Sent as Indra's messenger I come, seeking your great treasures, O Paṇis. Then she (the river) through fear of being leaped over aided me. Thus did I cross the waters of the Rasā.

3. (*Paṇis*) What is Indra like, O Saramā, what his appearance, as whose messenger thou didst set forth from afar ? If he comes, we will form a friendship with him. Then shall he be lord of our cattle.

4. (*Saramā*) I know that none can hurt him, but he can hurt, as whose messenger I set forth from afar. Deep rivers hide him not. Smitten by Indra, O Paṇis, ye are overthrown.

5. (*Paṇis*) These cattle, O Saramā, which thou soughtest, flying, O gracious one, round the ends of the sky, who will give them up to thee without fighting ? And our weapons are sharp.

6. (*Saramā*) Your weapons are harmless, O Paṇis, be your bodies proof against arrows, O vile ones. Be your path impenetrable, in neither wise will Bṛihaspati [2] be gracious to you.

[1] This is here a mythical river, but the name may be identical with the Araxes. There were several ancient rivers of this name, one being identified with the Jaxartes (Syr Darya) flowing into the Sea of Aral. There is another in Armenia (the Aras).

[2] See No. LIX.

7. (*Paṇis*) This treasure, O Saramā, is deep in the rocks, rich in cattle, horses, and wealth. The Paṇis guard it, who are good protectors. To a bountiful place thou hast come in vain.

8. (*Saramā*) Exhilarated by Soma hither will come the sages, Ayāsya, the Angirases, the Navagvas. They will share out this hoard of cattle. Thus will the Paṇis spit out their words indeed.

9. (*Paṇis*) Even as thou, O Saramā, hast come, impelled by divine power, we will make thee our sister. Return not. We will give thee a share of the cattle, O gracious one.

10. (*Saramā*) I know nought of brotherhood or sisterhood. Indra knows and the terrible Angirases. They that desire cows pleased me, as I came. Get you away hence, O Paṇis.

11. (*A speaker*) Get you far away hence, O Paṇis. Let the dwindling cattle come forth duly, which Bṛihaspati, Soma, the pressing-stones, the sages, and the priests found hidden.[1]

[1] Von Schroeder has explained this hymn as a dramatic performance. In that case some action probably took place between the last two verses.

XVII

TO HEAVEN AND EARTH

Heaven (Dyaus) is the all-embracing sky, and etymologically the same as the Greek Zeus and Latin Ju-piter, Sky-father (Ju-, stereotyped vocative used as a nominative).

but while Zeus has become a personal divinity with a rich mythology, we still have in the Vedic Dyaus the natural phenomenon. Dyaus is also sometimes feminine, as in this hymn, except the last two verses. The Earth (Pṛithivī) is very subordinate and celebrated in only one hymn apart from Dyaus.

1. Which was the former, which of them the later? How born? O sages, who discerns? They bear of themselves all that has existence. Day and Night revolve as on a wheel.

2. The two footless ones that go not uphold many a germ that goes and has feet. As a son in his own parents' lap, may Heaven and Earth protect us from fearful evil.

3. I invoke the gift of Aditi,[1] the gift free from hatred, inviolable, heavenly, invulnerable, worshipful. This, O Worlds, beget for the singer. May Heaven and Earth protect us from fearful evil.

4. May we serve the two Worlds that know not suffering, that aid with help, that have Gods as sons, both of them among the Gods with alternate days and nights. May Heaven and Earth protect us from fearful evil.

5. The two maidens uniting form a pair, twin sisters in their parents' lap, caressing the navel of the world. May Heaven and Earth protect us from fearful evil.

[1] Sāyaṇa explains Aditi here as the space between Heaven and Earth. Henry explains the gift as sinlessness. If Sāyaṇa's meaning is taken, it would refer to the blessing of seasonable rain. See Hymn XXXVII.

6. The two wide great abodes I duly invoke, the two parents with the protection of the Gods, the beauteous ones, who partake of the immortal drink. May Heaven and Earth protect us from fearful evil.

7. The two wide, broad, great ones, with far limits, I implore with worship at this sacrifice, the two gracious bounteous ones who share it. May Heaven and Earth protect us from fearful evil.

8. Whatever sin we have committed against the Gods, or ever against a friend, or against a master of the house, may this prayer be a propitiation for them. May Heaven and Earth protect us from fearful evil.

9. May the blessings both of men (and of the Gods) aid me, may both attend me with protection and help. Abundance be to the more generous one rather than to the godless. Exhilarated with refreshment may we be nourished, O Gods.

10. This solemn ordinance (the sacrifice) have I Sumedhas uttered to Heaven and Earth for them first to hear. May they guard us from fault and crime. As father and mother may they protect us with their help.

11. May this, O Heaven and Earth, be true, O father and mother, that which I here implore you. Become the nearest of the Gods with your help. May we find refreshment and a well-watered camp.

XVIII

TO VARUṆA

Owing to the resemblance of the name Varuṇa to the Greek Ouranos, Varuṇa has often been explained as the sky, but no etymologist has shown that the names are really related, and it is certain that the Indians never recognised Varuṇa as a Sky-god. He is the companion of Mitra, who appears to have been a Sun-god in Iranian, and hence the theory has been put forth that Varuṇa was a Moon-god. There is no evidence in the Veda for this, and as the name of neither has been explained, both divinities may have been borrowed from another religion, in which they were sun and moon, and in that case it is needless to seek for their origin as Indian gods in any natural phenomena.

1. Sing a great sublime prayer (*brahma*), dear to the ruler Varuṇa, the glorious, who, as a (sacrificial) slaughterer a skin, has stretched out the earth to be a carpet for the Sun.

2. Varuṇa spread abroad the air through the forests, he put speed in horses, milk in cows, intellect in the heart, Agni in the waters, the Sun in the sky, Soma on the mountain.

3. Varuṇa poured the upturned vessel (of the clouds) over heaven, earth, and the middle sky; therewith the king of all beings sprinkles the earth, as rain the barley.

4. Varuṇa sprinkles the broad earth and sky, when he desires milk. The mountains clothe themselves in the cloud, and the mighty heroes (Maruts) let them loose.

5. I will tell forth the great wondrous power

of Varuṇa the Asura-son, the glorious, who, standing in the middle sky, measured out the earth with the Sun as with a measure.

6. None has dared to question this great wondrous power of the most wise God, in that the shining rivers with their water fill not the one sea into which they flow.

7. What sin we have ever committed against an intimate, O Varuṇa, against a friend or companion at any time, a brother, a neighbour, or a stranger, that, O Varuṇa, loose from us.

8. If like gamblers at play we have cheated, whether in truth or without knowing, all that loose from us, O God. So may we be dear to thee, O Varuṇa.

XIX

TO VARUṆA

A prayer to Varuṇa for the cure of dropsy, attributed to the sage Vasishṭha. An attempt has been made to prove that Varuṇa was a sea-god. He certainly controls the waters, but by his ordinances he controls all the courses of nature, and it is only later that he is connected specially with the sea.

1. Let me not, O king Varuṇa, go into the earthen house [1]: be gracious, good ruler, show grace.

2. If I go shaking like a leathern bag blown up, O thou armed with a hurling-stone: be gracious, good ruler, show grace.

[1] The burial urn; see No. LVI.

3. Through weakness of understanding I have gone perversely, I know not how, O pure one : be gracious, good ruler, show grace.

4. Thirst came upon thy singer though standing in the midst of waters : be gracious, good ruler, show grace.

5. Whatever, O Varuṇa, we men commit in sin against the divine race, if in unwisdom we have thwarted thy ordinance, for that offence, O God, harm us not.

XX

TO VARUṆA

1. Wise verily are the peoples through his might, who fixed apart wide earth and heaven. In truth he set in motion the great high firmament, and the star (the sun), and he has spread out the earth.

2. And to my own self I say this : when shall I come into the presence of Varuṇa ? What oblation of mine will he accept without wrath ? When may I with a cheerful heart behold his mercy ?

3. I ask the sin, O Varuṇa, desirous to see it. I go to the wise to inquire. One same thing the sages have told me : this Varuṇa is wroth with thee.

4. What was the most grievous sin, O Varuṇa, that thou desirest to slay the praiser, thy friend ?

Reveal it to me, thou hard to deceive, who preservest thine own nature; quickly may I approach thee sinless with reverence.

5. Our father's sins loose from us, loose those which we have committed of ourselves. O king, loose Vasishṭha,[1] as a thief that delights in cattle, as a calf from its halter.

6. It was not my own thought, it was illusion. It was wine, anger, dice, thoughtlessness. Sleep is stronger in the transgression of the weaker, making us inattentive to sin.[2]

7. As a slave may I do service to the merciful, the vigilant God, without sin. The noble God has given wisdom to the foolish. The greater sage leads the wise on to wealth.

8. O Varuṇa, who preservest thine own nature, may this hymn of praise abide in thy heart. Blessing be on us in acquiring and on us in protection.[3] Protect us ever with blessings.

[1] The seer to whom this hymn with the whole of Book VII is attributed. His great rival was Viśvāmitra, to whom Book III is attributed.

[2] I.e. sleep is stronger than man, and makes him commit sins without his knowing it (Bergaigne).

[3] Mr. Bijapurkar says, "To a Hindu mind there need be no difficulty as to the explanation of this line. *Yoga* means 'acquisition'; *kshema* means 'protection.'" Grassmann says, "work" and "rest."

XXI

TO MITRA

It will be seen from this hymn how far Mitra can be considered a Sun-god. The name in Sanskrit means "friend," but the form has never been explained. The conception is that of a powerful beneficent being, representing a stage far more advanced than the deification of natural phenomena, and there is no reason to suppose that his cult ever went back to a nature-worship stage among the Vedic peoples, particularly if, like Varuṇa, he was borrowed from the Mitanni as a deity to whom it seemed wise and prudent to pay worship. Cf. p. 20.

1. Mitra speaking rouses mankind. Mitra bears up heaven and earth. Mitra with unwinking eye beholds the peoples. To Mitra offer the oblation with ghee.

2. May that mortal bringing offerings, O Mitra, prevail, who to thee, O Āditya, pays obeisance duly. Not slain nor vanquished is he whom thou aidest. No trouble reaches him from near or far.

3. May we be free from disease, rejoicing in the offering, firm-kneed on the wide expanse of earth. Observing the Āditya's ordinance may we abide in the good will of Mitra.

4. This Mitra, the worshipful, the very gracious, a king ruling excellently, has been born as disposer. May we abide in the good will of him the adorable, in his gracious kindness.

5. The great Āditya, to be approached with worship, who assembles men, who is very gracious

to the singer, to him, to Mitra most wonderful offer in the fire the acceptable oblation.

6. The help of Mitra, the God who protects mankind, brings gain, wealth of most brilliant fame.

7. Mitra of wide renown, who surpasses heaven through his greatness, who surpasses earth through his glories.

8. To Mitra who gives mighty help the five peoples strive. He bears up all the Gods.

9. Mitra among Gods and pious men,[1] for him whose sacrificial grass is spread, has provided food according to the desired ordinances.

XXII

TO MITRA AND VARUṆA

Mitra is celebrated alone in only one hymn. Usually he is associated with Varuṇa and shares his functions. The term "Asura" is later the name of a class of gods opposed to the devas, but in its older sense of god it is applied specially to Varuṇa, and here to Mitra and Varuṇa combined.

1. Guardians of Law, preserving true ordinances, ye mount the chariot in the highest firmament. Whom ye aid, O Mitra and Varuṇa, for him the rain pours from heaven in sweetness.

2. As sovereigns ye rule over this world, O Mitra and Varuṇa; in the assembly ye behold

[1] Hillebrandt has shown that *āyú*, usually translated "man," applies specially to beings who, as ritually pure, are "active" in taking part in the sacrifice. In No. XLVIII it appears to be a proper name.

the light of the sky. We implore rain, your gift, immortality. The thunderers traverse heaven and earth.

3. The two sovereigns, the mighty, the bulls, Mitra and Varuṇa, are the swift lords of heaven and earth. In shining clouds ye come to the sound (of our praise). Ye make the heaven to rain through the Asura's magic power.

4. Your magic power, Mitra and Varuṇa, is set up in heaven. The sun moves as light, a shining weapon. With cloud and rain ye hide him in heaven. O Parjanya, the sweet drops set themselves in motion.

5. The Maruts yoke their light car in splendour. It goes, Mitra and Varuṇa, as a hero seeking cattle. The thunderers traverse the shining spaces of air. With the milk of heaven may ye sovereigns sprinkle us.

6. Parjanya raises his voice, O Mitra and Varuṇa, accompanied with refreshment, shining and gleaming. In clouds did the Maruts robe themselves with magic power. Ye make the heaven to rain, the ruddy, the spotless ones.

7. Through law (*dharman*), wise Mitra and Varuṇa, ye protect the ordinances through the Asura's magic power. Duly ye rule over the whole world. Ye set the sun in heaven as a shining car.

XXIII

TO INDRA AND VARUṆA

Varuṇa's relation to Indra is one of rivalry. In another hymn to them both it is said, "One slays the Vṛitras in battles, the other ever protects the ordinances." This hymn probably represents the combination and harmonising of two cults. The seer of the hymn is a royal sage, Trasadasyu son of Durgaha. Sāyaṇa explains that when Durgaha was in bondage (why, we do not know; Hillebrandt says "bound as sacrifice") his wife honoured the seven sages, who, being pleased, told her to sacrifice to Indra and Varuṇa, and in consequence Trasadasyu was born.

1. (*Varuṇa*) Mine of old is the sovereignty, who am ruler over all that lives, like as all the immortals are ours. The Gods follow the will of Varuṇa. I bear sway over the folk of the highest sphere.

2. I Varuṇa am king. To me belong the primal godheads.[1] The Gods follow the will of Varuṇa. I bear sway over the folk of the highest sphere.

3. I Varuṇa am Indra. Through my greatness the two wide deep spaces of air firm fixed, all beings, and the two worlds (heaven and earth) I produced as a cunning workman [2] and established.

4. I made the dropping waters to swell. I established the sky in the seat of Law. Through Law has the law-maintaining son of Aditi spread out the earth in threefold wise.

[1] Lit. asuraships, state of *asura*, in the sense of "god."

[2] Or as a proper name, Tvashṭar, who as the divine architect is identified by Sāyaṇa with Prajāpati.

5. (*Indra*) Upon me do men with fair horses, intent on booty, upon me when in straits in battle do they call. I make the contest. I Indra am Maghavan. I whirl up the dust with conquering might.

6. I formed all these. The power of the Gods restrains not me, the irresistible. When the Soma draughts, when the hymns have intoxicated me, both the infinite spaces of air are afraid.

7. (*The Seer*) All beings know thee (Indra). This dost thou, O worshipper, proclaim for Varuṇa. Thou, Indra, art famed as the slayer of the Vṛitras. Thou didst make the pent-up rivers to flow.

8. Our fathers here were the seven sages, when the son of Durgaha was bound. They by sacrificing obtained for her (his wife) Trasadasyu, like Indra, a slayer of enemies, a demigod.

9. The wife of Purukutsa made offerings to you both, O Indra and Varuṇa, with oblations and worship. Thus did ye give to her king Trasadasyu, a smiter of foes, a demigod.

10. May we win wealth and exult therein, the Gods in the oblation, the cattle in the pasture. O Indra and Varuṇa, grant us ever a cow that is easily milked.

XXIV

TO THE MARUTS, THE STORM-WINDS

The Maruts, called also Rudras and Rudriyas, are the storm-winds, and their horses and dappled deer are explained as the clouds; but although they are the sons of Rudra and Pṛiśni, they are the associates of Indra, and help him in his fight with Vṛitra. They were explained by A. Kuhn as the spirits of the dead, and Hillebrandt has pointed out several peculiar features, which imply that this was their original character.

1. O Rudras, companions of Indra, with one accord in golden chariots come hither for our welfare. This prayer is brought to you from us, as to the thirsty one desiring water the springs of heaven.

2. Armed are ye with axes and lances, ye wise ones, with goodly bows, arrows, and quivers. Fair horses and chariots have ye, O sons of Pṛiśni; with fair weapons, O Maruts, ye come gloriously.

3. From sky and mountains ye shake wealth for the devout one; the forests yield from before your way through fear. Ye make the earth to tremble, sons of Pṛiśni, when, O terrible ones, for adornment ye have yoked the dappled deer.

4. Swift as wind the Maruts, robed in rain, like twins quite alike, well-adorned, with tawny horses, with red horses, spotless and full of vigour, in greatness wide as the heaven.

5. Abounding in drops, anointed, bounteous,

brilliant to behold, granting gifts that cannot be taken away, of noble birth, with gold on their breasts, the singers of heaven have won an immortal name.

6. Spears, O Maruts, are on your shoulders, might, strength, and vigour are placed in your arms, manliness in your heads, weapons in your chariots, and all beauty is an adornment on your bodies.

7. A brilliant gift of cattle, horses, chariots, and heroes, O Maruts, grant us. Bestow upon us fame, O Rudriyas. May I win your divine aid.

8. Ah! heroes, Maruts, be gracious to us, O wealthy ones, immortals, who know the Law, who give ear to truth, sages and young, dwelling on the great mountains, waxing greatly.

XXV

TO INDRA AND THE MARUTS

One of a number of hymns in dialogue form, like Nos. XVI and XLIII. It is disputed whether the verses of these hymns represent the dialogue belonging to a prose narrative that has been lost, or whether the whole hymn was a dramatic representation. The latter view seems to be supported by the fact that between verses 10 and 11 hymns to Indra appear to have been sung by the Maruts and certain ceremonies performed. But these were probably part of the sacrifice. The dialogue would fit equally well into a narrative of prose, forming a kind of composition which later certainly became an established literary form. The whole hymn, like that to Indra and Varuṇa (No. XXIII), implies the harmonising of two hostile forms of worship. Indra is represented as

on his way to a sacrifice, and unwilling to share the feasting with his one-time companions.

1. (*The Seer*) With what splendour have the Maruts of equal age, with a common nest, in consort adorned themselves? With what purpose, and whence come they? The heroes sing forth their strength longing for wealth.

2. Whose spells have the youthful ones accepted? Who has turned hither the Maruts for the sacrifice? As they advance like eagles in the sky, with what strong devotion may we cause them to stay?

3. (*A Marut*) Why, Indra, dost thou go alone, being so glad? O ruler of beings, how does this happen to thee? Thou hast been wont to hold converse with us the splendid ones. Say, O guider of fallow steeds, what hast thou against us?

4. (*Indra*) Spells and songs are my delight, and the Soma-drops. My strength rises. For me the Soma-stone is prepared. The hymns implore and entice me. My two fallow steeds are bringing me hither.

5. (*A Marut*) So then decking ourselves, yoked with our companions, their own lords, with might we yoke the dappled steeds. Surely, O Indra, this has been thy wont.

6. (*Indra*) Where was that wont of yours, Maruts, when ye left me alone in the serpent-slaying? But I mighty, powerful, and strong, smote down every enemy with my bolts.

7. (*A Marut*) Much hast thou done, united with us, O hero, with common exploits. Many deeds will we yet do with power, most mighty Indra—O Maruts, when it is our will.

8. (*Indra*) I slew Vṛitra, O Maruts, with my own strength, in my fury was I powerful. Armed with the thunderbolt I made for mankind those all-sparkling waters easy of approach.

9. (*A Marut*) Nought is there, O Maghavan, that resists thee. None is there like thee found among the Gods. None that now is born or has been born can rival thee. What things thou wouldest do, do, exalted one.

10. (*Indra*) So to me alone be boundless might. What things I have dared will I achieve with wisdom. For I am found mighty, O Maruts. What things I set going, I, Indra, am lord of them.

11. The hymn of praise, O Maruts, gladdened me, when ye made to me, O heroes, the laudable spell, to me the mighty Indra, the joyous, friends to a friend, to myself yourselves.

12. In very truth ye beam upon me full of glory and blameless vigour. When I behold you, O Maruts of shining hue, ye pleased me and are pleasing now.

13. (*The Seer*) Who here, O Maruts, has glorified you? Come as friends to friends. Inspire my devotions, O brilliant ones, and become the witnesses of these my pious works.

14. (*A Marut*) In that the poet cherishes (us) for the pious one, the wisdom of Mānya has brought us. Turn right soon, ye Maruts, here to the sage. Let the invoker sing to you these hymns.

15. (*The Seer*) For you is this praise, O Maruts, this hymn of Mānya the poet, the son of Mandāra. Come with refreshment hither. May we find for ourselves strength, refreshment, and a well-watered enclosure.[1]

XXVI

TO RUDRA

Rudra is usually regarded as a storm-god, but he has also other distinct characteristics. His anger is deprecated, and he is implored not to slay his worshippers. He brings remedies and cures sickness, i.e. when not appeased he causes disease. In the Brāhmaṇa of the Hundred Paths he is said to have the name Śarva among the Easterners and Bhava in the north-west. These are the names of two separate divinities in the Atharvaveda, and we appear to have in Rudra the combination of several gods with their characteristics. His maleficence points, as Hillebrandt has shown, to his having absorbed the features of a deity responsible for the diseases and calamities of the rainy season. He has later become Śiva, "the auspicious one," the destructive aspect of the Hindu Trinity, Brahmā, Vishṇu, and Śiva.

1. To Rudra the mighty with hair wound like a shell, the ruler of heroes, we offer these prayers, that blessing may be upon two-footed and four-

[1] A doubtful phrase. Hillebrandt, "schnell-lohnende Arbeit."

footed, that all may be prosperous in this village without sickness.

2. Be merciful to us, Rudra, and give us joy. We will serve thee, ruler of heroes, with worship. The blessing and welfare that father Manu won by sacrificing may we obtain through thy guidances, O Rudra.

3. May we obtain thy favour through the sacrifice, ruler of heroes, O Rudra, merciful one. Come well-disposed to our dwellings. With our heroes unhurt may we offer thee the oblation.

4. The shining Rudra that makes the sacrifice prosper, the impetuous sage, we invoke to help us. May he drive far from us the divine anger. His favour verily we implore.

5. The red Boar of heaven with shell-wound hair, his shining form we invoke with worship. Bearing in his hand precious remedies may he grant us refuge, protection, and shelter.

6. This hymn is uttered to the father of the Maruts, nourishment sweeter than sweet for Rudra. O immortal one, grant us the food of mortals. To us, to our children, and grand-children be merciful.

7. Kill not our great or our small, our growing one or our full-grown man, our father or our mother. Injure not, O Rudra, our dear selves.

8. Injure us not in our children and grand-children, in our pious one, our cattle or our horses. In thy wrath, O Rudra, slay not our heroes. We invoke thee ever with sacrifices.

9. As a herdsman I have driven to thee these praises. O father of the Maruts, grant us thy good will, for good is thy most merciful favour. Thus verily we implore thy help.

10. Far off be that which slays cattle and men. Ruler of heroes, be thy good will towards us. Be merciful to us and speak for us, O God. Then grant us protection of double strength.

11. Desirous of help we have uttered worship to him. May Rudra with the Maruts hear our invocation. May Mitra and Varuṇa grant it, Aditi, Sindhu, Earth, and Heaven.

XXVII

TO PARJANYA, THE GOD OF RAIN

Parjanya is unimportant in the Veda, but is clearly a rain-god. With the alternation of rain and drought he changes his character and even his sex. He is also connected with the lightning, as in one hymn it is said that "he shatters the trees and smites the demons: the whole world fears him through his great weapon." The name is probably related to the Lithuanian *perkúnas*, "thunder" and "thunder-god," Gothic *fairguni*, "mountain," and Icelandic *fjörgyn*, "earth." These cannot all be derived from one form, and hence any connection has been denied; but we have no right to assume that there was only one form in the primitive language. Even in the case of evidently related words like the numerals it is impossible to trace them back to one uniform type. The "three words" may have meant thunder originally. Sāyaṇa explains them as the three Vedas.

1. Speak the three words preceded by light, which milk this udder of sweet milk. The Bull

producing the Calf, the germ of the plants, as soon as he is born he roars.

2. May he who is the increaser of plants and waters, who as God rules over everything living, give threefold shelter and protection, and threefold light for our assistance.

3. Now he is a barren female, now he engenders; according to his will he forms his body. The mother receives milk from the father; through him the father grows, through him the son.

4. In him all beings abide. Through the three heavens the waters flow threefold. The three reservoirs sprinkling down drip from all sides abundance of sweetness.

5. May this hymn be to the heart of the monarch Parjanya; may he accept it. May the rains that give pleasure be ours, and fruitful plants protected by the God.

6. He is the fructifying Bull of all (plants). In him is the breath (*ātman*) of all that moves and stands. May this Law (the sacrifice) protect me a hundred autumns. Ye Gods, protect us ever with blessings.

XXVIII

TO PARJANYA

The reference to the mouth of Agni shows that the hymn is part of the sacrifice, and that the whole ceremony is as much a spell as a prayer.

1. Sing forth to Parjanya, the son of heaven,

the gracious. May he enrich us with pasturage.

2. Parjanya, who forms the germ of plants, of cows, of mares, of women.

3. Pour for him into the mouth (of Agni) the oblation most sweet. May he grant us unfailing refreshment.

XXIX

TO THE FROGS

This hymn immediately follows the two preceding hymns in the order of the Rigveda. It is, as Bloomfield has shown, a rain-spell, though some Western scholars have interpreted it as a satire on the priests. The commentator Yāska says, "Vasishṭha (the seer of the hymn) praised Parjanya. The frogs approved of him. Seeing the frogs approving he praised them." The frogs in the order of nature perform their function, which, like the celebration of the sacrifice by the Brahmins, helps to produce the due result.

1. Having lain for a year, brahmins keeping a vow, the frogs have uttered forth their voice that has been stirred by Parjanya.

2. When the waters of heaven came upon them, as they lay like a dry water-skin in a lake, then like the lowing of cows with calves the voice of the frogs rises together.

3. When it has rained on them, the longing ones, the thirsty, uttering their croaking with the coming of the rains, one, like a son to his father, approaches another as he speaks.

4. One of the two greets another, when they have exulted in the pouring forth of the waters;

when the frog being rained upon leaps about, the speckled one mingles his voice with the yellow one.

5. When one repeats the voice of another, as a pupil that of his teacher, then all their (croaking) is like a lesson well repeated, which ye eloquent ones recite in the waters.

6. Lowing like a cow is one, bleating like a goat is another, speckled is one, another of them is yellow. Bearing a common name, different in colour, they vary their voices in many ways as they speak.

7. Like brahmins in the night that ends the soma-sacrifice, as it were chanting all round the full bowl (or lake), ye celebrate, O frogs, the day of the year which has begun the rains.

8. Brahmins with the Soma they have raised their voices, performing their yearly spell (*brahma*), Adhvaryus,[1] heated (or, preparing the hot milk), sweating, they come in sight, not one is hidden.

9. They have protected the divine order of the twelve-month. These men transgress not the season. In a year, with the coming of the rains, the heated milk-offerings obtain release.

10. He that lows like a cow, he that bleats like a goat, the speckled one, the yellow one, they have given us riches. The frogs giving us hundreds of cows in a thousandfold soma-pressing extend our life.

[1] See No. XLVIII.

XXX

TO SOMA BEING PURIFIED

The soma-juice on being pressed between stones from the stalks of the soma-plant flowed through a strainer of wool along a wooden channel into three bowls, and was there mixed with water and milk. A myth found in the Brāhmaṇas and later is that the moon is the Soma of the gods, which they drink up every month. As the story is apparently of popular origin and not due to learned speculation, several scholars now hold Hillebrandt's view that this myth underlies the Vedic theology, and that in the Soma-hymns it is the Moon that is in reality worshipped, the preparation of the Soma being a symbolical or magical rite representing and furthering the divine sacrifice celebrated by the gods. It is remarkable that apart from this there is no Moon-worship in the Veda.

1. O friends, sit down, sing to him that is being purified; bedeck him as a child with sacrifices for adornment.

2. As a calf with its mothers, unite (with the milk) him that makes the house prosper, for intoxication that wins over the Gods, and gives double strength.

3. Purify him that makes the prayer prosper, that it may be for the troop (of Maruts) for their feasting, that it may be for Mitra and Varuṇa most acceptable.

4. With chants they have hymned thee that findest wealth for us; we clothe thy hue with draughts of milk.

5. Lord of our intoxications, O Indu, thou art

the food of the Gods ; as a friend to a friend be the best guide.

6. Put far from us every devouring demon ; drive away the godless, the false one, and misfortune from us.

XXXI

TO SOMA BEING PURIFIED

The victories of Indra (Hymn XIII) are naturally attributed here to the Soma which inspires him. This hymn is no doubt also an incantation for success in battle. Indu, "drop," is a frequent epithet of Soma.

1. In sweetest, most exhilarating stream be purified, O Soma, pressed for Indra to drink.

2. The demon-slayer, beholding all men, in the lap forged of bronze, over the soma-plank, has taken up his abode.

3. Be thou the best granter of freedom, the most generous, most valiant slayer of Vṛitra. Bestow on us the gift of the generous ones.

4. Flow on with thy juice to the feast of the great Gods ; flow on to victory and fame.

5. To thee we come day by day for this one purpose. To thee are our prayers, O Indu.

6. The daughter of the Sun purifies thy Soma flowing (from one vessel to another), with the unfailing strainer (of wool) continually.

7. Ten slender maidens (the fingers) seize him in the battle, the sisters on the final day.

8. The maids send him forth, they blow the bagpipes [1]; a threefold protection is the sweet Soma.

9. The kine, the milch-cows, mix with him, the infant, the Soma, for Indra to drink.

10. In the intoxications of this Indra slays all the Vṛitras, and the Hero bestows gifts.

XXXII

THE RAPE OF SOMA

The myth of the carrying off of Soma from heaven by an eagle, who brings it to Indra, occurs in several places. Another hymn says, "The bird going swift as mind crossed the bronze fortress; going to heaven he brought the Soma to the thunderbolt-bearer." Who is the speaker of the first verse has been much disputed, but Bloomfield has shown that in other versions of the story the eagle is identified with Agni. Bloomfield further seeks a naturalistic basis for the entire myth, and identifies Agni with the lightning, the fortresses with the thunder-clouds, and the falling feather with the lightning striking the ground. Even so, the divine archer is unexplained. As Bloomfield himself says in another connection, "no sane scholar will now, as was once the habit, try to make each of the silly 'stunts' which the Vedic hymns ascribe to the Aśvins part of the organic matter contained in the myth." [2]

1. (*Agni*) Even in the womb I comprehended all the births of the Gods. A thousand bronze fortresses guarded me. Then as an eagle did I dart forth swiftly.

[1] I.e. the stalks of the soma-plant making a noise when being pressed. The kine are the draughts of milk used in mixing.

[2] *The Religion of the Veda*, p. 116.

2. (*Soma*) Not easily did he bear me away, but in energy and heroism he was superior. Straightway did the liberal one leave the enemies behind, and he outsped the winds victoriously.

3. When the eagle swooped down from the sky, or when they (the Gods) bore the liberal one thence, when against him fierce in mind Kṛiśānu the archer rushed and sped the bowstring—

4. When, like (the Aśvins) with Indra [1] bearing Bhujyu, the eagle hastening bore him from the great back of the sky, then a feather from his wing fell between in the course of the rushing bird.

5. (*The Seer*) The gleaming bowl, anointed with milk, the bright swelling plant, proffered by the serving priests, the first draught of sweetness, may Indra the bounteous take to drink for exhilaration, may the hero take to drink for exhilaration.

XXXIII

TO INDRA AND SOMA

Indra's achievements in this hymn refer to his slaying of Vṛitra. See Hymns XIII and XLIII.

1. Indra and Soma, great is your greatness. Ye have performed the great first deeds. Ye

[1] Doubtful; Hillebrandt reads *udrāvato*, "from the ocean." Bhujyu was a protégé of the Aśvins, saved by them in the ocean, and brought home in a hundred-oared ship; see Hymn VIII.

have acquired the Sun and the Sky. Ye have destroyed all the glooms and the revilers.

2. Indra and Soma, ye cause the Dawn to shine, ye make the Sun rise with his light. Ye have supported the Heaven with a pillar, ye have spread abroad Earth the mother.

3. Indra and Soma, ye slay the serpent, Vṛitra that encompassed the waters, and the Heaven approved of you. Ye have made the torrents of the rivers to flow, and have filled the many oceans.

4. Indra and Soma, ye have put the cooked (milk) [1] in the uncooked udders of the kine. Ye have collected the free-flowing shining milk in the motley-coloured cows.

5. Indra and Soma, ye verily bestow illustrious wealth with offspring. Ye have placed among men heroic vigour that wins in combats, O mighty ones.

XXXIV

A SONG OF SOMA-PREPARING

This hymn occurs in the ninth book, which is devoted almost entirely to Soma-worship. The hymn cannot have formed part of the ceremonial, but may have been a popular song sung during the preparation of the Soma.

1. Varied truly are our thoughts. Varied are the ways of men. The joiner wants to find a breakage, the medicine-man an accident, the

[1] The milk coming warm from the cow is considered to be already cooked.

brahman-priest a worshipper. O Indu, flow round for Indra.

2. The smith with brittle firewood, with wings of birds (to fan the flame), with stones and glowing heat of fire, wants golden riches for himself. O Indu, flow round for Indra.

3. I'm poet, dad is medicine-man, mama [1] is grinding at the mill. With varied thoughts intent on gain we follow after wealth of cows. O Indu, flow round for Indra.

4. The horse an easy car to draw, the troop of lovers jest and laugh, the frog wants too a water-pool. O Indu, flow round for Indra.

XXXV

TO PŪSHAN

The name Pūshan means "nourisher." He is a guide and protector on the roads, and recovers lost cattle. He appears to have been the deity of a pastoral tribe, whose worship was taken over by others. This would explain why he is not directly connected with any natural phenomenon. His steeds are goats, and he usually receives, not Soma to drink, but a preparation of barley. The explanation of the early commentators is that he is a Sun-god. This is generally admitted to have been his original character, but it should be noticed that this conclusion has usually been arrived at under the presupposition that he must represent some phenomenon of nature.

1. Drive away hindrances from our road, O Pūshan, son of liberation. Be victorious, O God, before us.

[1] The words for father and mother in the original are pet names (*tata*, *nanā*).

2. The evil, malicious wolf, that lies in wait for us, O Pūshan, drive thou away from our path.

3. The robber that besets the path, plotting in the dark, far from the road chase him away.

4. The firebrand of the double-tongued one, plotting evil, whosoe'er he be, tread out with thy foot.

5. O Pūshan, wonder-worker, counsellor, we desire thy help, wherewith thou didst aid our fathers.

6. Then grant, bestower of all blessings, best wielder of the golden sword, that we may gain wealth easy to win.

7. Lead us beyond our pursuers, make good and smooth our paths. O Pūshan, for this find the power.

8. Lead us to good pasture, with no new toils on the road. O Pūshan, for this find the power.

9. Help, fill, and bestow ; strengthen and fill our bodies. O Pūshan, for this find the power.

10. Pūshan we do not revile ; with hymns we laud him. For wealth we approach the wonder-worker.

XXXVI

TO PŪSHAN

1. O Pūshan, lead us with one that knows (the ways), who will straightway point out, who will say, " There it is."

2. May we meet Pūshan, who will show us houses, and who will say, "There they are."

3. Pūshan's wheel suffers no hurt, the wagon falls not down, nor does the tire of the wheel shake.

4. Him who honours him with an oblation, Pūshan forgets not. He is the first to find wealth.

5. May Pūshan go after our kine, may Pūshan protect our horses, may Pūshan bestow booty upon us.

6. O Pūshan, follow the kine of him that sacrifices, that presses the Soma, and of those among us that praise thee.

7. May none be lost, may none be hurt, may none go to destruction in a pit. But come with them unharmed.

8. Pūshan that listens, that is watchful, that loses nought that is his, the Lord of wealth, we entreat.

9. O Pūshan, in thy ordinance may we ne'er be harmed. As thy praisers we are here.

10. May Pūshan stretch out his right hand from afar. May he drive back to us what is lost.

XXXVII

TO THE ĀDITYAS

The Ādityas are a group of seven or eight gods, later twelve, sons of the goddess Aditi. Aditi means "absence of bonds, freedom," and she has been explained as a personifica-

tion of the idea of freedom from bondage. Priestly speculation would be capable of this, but such deification does not look like a feature of popular religion. Another view is that she has arisen from a misunderstanding of the phrase "sons of Aditi," which may have originally meant "sons of freedom," and in which *aditi* was later taken as a personal name. Hillebrandt interprets it of the light of heaven. Cf. Hymn XVII.

1. Through the new help of the Ādityas may we acquire protection most beneficent; may they be ready to listen, and place this sacrifice in sinlessness and freedom.

2. May the Ādityas and Aditi be exhilarated, Mitra, Aryaman, and Varuṇa the most righteous. May the protectors of the world be ours. May they drink the Soma for our help to-day.

3. May all the Ādityas and all the Maruts, the All-gods, and all the Ṛibhus,[1] Indra, Agni, and the Aśvins being lauded, ye Gods protect us ever with blessings.

XXXVIII

TO THE ALL-GODS

The All-gods (*viśve devās*) appear to be thus addressed in order that no deity should be excluded, but they are sometimes distinguished from the gods as a whole. The verses of this hymn are in the form of riddles, none of the deities being mentioned by name. There are other instances of riddles in the Veda. This frequent feature in the religious or mythological thought of many peoples is a significant factor in the invention and development of myths. It shows

[1] See p. 95.

that the mythopœic or story-telling tendency is not a mere blind impulse or a misunderstood interpretation of natural phenomena, but that the poets could deliberately invent and imagine, and that just for that reason we cannot expect to trace myths back to a primitive stock of ideas, any more than we can derive all words from a primitive stock of roots.

1. One is tawny, of changing form, bountiful, young ; with golden ornament he decks himself (Soma).

2. One shining has taken his seat in the lap (the altar) ; a wise one among the Gods (Agni).

3. One bears in his hand a bronze axe ; constant among the Gods (Tvashṭar).

4. One bears grasped in his hand a thunderbolt, wherewith he slays his enemies (Indra).

5. One bears in his hand a sharp weapon ; a pure One, mighty, bearing healing medicines (Rudra).

6. One makes the paths prosperous, like a thief ; this one knows of hidden treasures (Pūshan).

7. One, wide-going, makes three steps ; thither where the Gods enjoy exhilaration (Vishṇu).

8. With birds two go together with one woman ; faring forth as on a journey (the Aśvins with Sūryā, daughter of the Sun).

9. Two highest ones made their seat in the sky ; lords sipping ghee (Mitra and Varuṇa).

10. Some singing hymns conceived a great Sāma-song ; with it they made the sun to shine (the Atris, a family of priests).

XXXIX

TO THE ALL-GODS

This curious litany contains names of gods that are not found elsewhere, and the identifications of some are not certain. It illustrates the fact that any being or object which has a prescribed function in the divine order (*ṛita*) of the sacrifice may become a god or have a divine character.

1. Blessing to us be Indra and Agni with their favours. Blessing to us be Indra and Varuṇa worshipped with the oblation. Blessing to us be Indra and Soma for our welfare, blessing and benediction. Blessing to us be Indra and Pūshan for winning booty.

2. Blessing to us be Bhaga, blessing to us be Śaṃsa (the hymn). Blessing to us be Purandhi, blessing be Wealth. Blessing be the Śaṃsa of the well-restrained true one. Blessing to us be Aryaman of many births.

3. Blessing to us be Dhātar (the Disposer, Creator), blessing to us be Dhartar (the Preserver).[1] Blessing to us be the Wide-extending (Earth) through her own might. Blessing to us be the great Sky and Earth, blessing the Soma-stone. Blessing to us be the good invocations of the Gods.

4. Blessing to us be the bright-faced Agni. Blessing to us be Mitra and Varuṇa, blessing the

[1] Explained by Sāyaṇa as Varuṇa.

Aśvins. Blessing to us be the Good Deeds of good-doers. Blessing to us blow vigorous Vāta (wind).

5. Blessing to us be Heaven and Earth at the first invocation. Blessing the Air for seeing. Blessing to us the Plants, the Trees. Blessing to us be the victorious Lord of the middle sky.[1]

6. Blessing to us be the God Indra with the Vasus. Blessing to us be Varuṇa of good hymns with the Ādityas. Blessing to us be Rudra, the healer, with the Rudras. Blessing to us may Tvashṭar listen here with the (heavenly) women.[2]

7. Blessing to us be Soma, blessing be the Brahma (prayer). Blessing to us be the Pressing-stones, blessing the Sacrifices. Blessing to us be the Setting up of the sacrificial posts. Blessing to us the sacred Grasses, blessing the Altar.

8. Blessing to us may wide-seeing Sūrya rise. Blessing to us be the four Quarters. Blessing to us be the firm Mountains. Blessing to us the Rivers, blessing the Waters.

9. Blessing to us be Aditi with the ordinances. Blessing to us be the Maruts with goodly hymns. Blessing to us be Vishṇu, blessing be Pūshan. Blessing to us be Bhavitra,[3] blessing be Vāyu (wind).

10. Blessing to us be God Savitar, the protector. Blessing to us be the far-shining Dawns. Blessing

[1] Indra (Sāyaṇa). [2] Wives of the gods.
[3] The world of living beings.

to us be Parjanya for offspring. Blessing to us be the Lord of the Field, the propitious.

11. Blessing to us be the Gods, the All-gods, blessing be Sarasvatī with the Prayers. Blessing be they that visit us, and they that seek the offering.[1] Blessing to us be the dwellers in Heaven, in Earth, in the Waters.

12. Blessing to us be the Lords of Truth. Blessing to us be the Horses, blessing the Cattle. Blessing to us be the Ṛibhus, the skilful, the dexterous-handed. Blessing to us be the Fathers at our invocations.

13. Blessing to us be the God Aja Ekapād (One-footed Goat). Blessing to us be Ahi Budhnya (Serpent of the Deep),[2] blessing the Ocean. Blessing to us be Apām Napāt (Son of the waters), the embryo. Blessing to us be Pṛiśni, protected by the Gods.

14. May the Ādityas, the Rudras, the Vasus accept this hymn (*brahma*), made anew. May the Heavenly ones, the Earthly, the Ox-born (Maruts) hear us, the worshipful.

15. May the worshipful ones of the worshipful Gods, adored by Manu, immortal, knowing the Law, grant us wide going to-day. Ye Gods, protect us ever with blessings.

[1] These appear to be two groups of Fathers, as the next line indicates, where they are not named, but designated by their triple habitation (Bergaigne).

[2] Unknown divinities. *Aja* has also the meaning "unborn" and "driver," as well as "goat."

XL

TO VĀCH, SPEECH

This hymn is also in the form of a riddle. The Indian interpretation from the time of the earliest commentators has been that it means the goddess Vāch. Whitney has suggested Faith, Space, or Law (*ṛita*), but the two latter suggestions at least are not happy, as the grammar of the hymn itself requires a feminine word. From the conception of the power of prayer and spells in the Veda it is clear how Speech could be looked upon as accompanying and supporting all the gods, and reaching wherever the magic power of the *brahma* extended. The idea bears a resemblance to the Word of God as personified in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, xviii. 15 ff., and to the Logos of Philo, but it did not lead to the same development in cosmogonic doctrine. In the Veda it is no doubt not a popular notion, but due to brahmanic speculation, and Vāch is later absorbed in Sarasvatī, the goddess of eloquence. The hymn occurs also in the Atharvaveda in a slightly modified form.

1. I go with the Rudras, with the Vasus,[1] I go with the Ādityas and the All-gods. I bear both Mitra and Varuṇa, Indra and Agni, and both the Aśvins.

2. I bear the fermenting Soma, I bear Tvashṭar, and also Pūshan and Bhaga.[2] I assign wealth for the sacrificer, for him that offers first, that presses the Soma.

3. I am the queen, the assembler of treasures, the wise, the first of the worshipful ones. In

[1] A class of gods, Waters, Soma, etc.
[2] One of the Ādityas.

manifold places did the Gods divide me, who dwell in many abodes, causing me to penetrate many regions.[1]

4. Through me he eats food who perceives, who breathes, who hears what is spoken. Unknowing they repose upon me. Hear, O illustrious one, that which is worthy of belief I say to thee.

5. I, even of myself say this, (an utterance) acceptable to Gods and men : whomever I desire, him do I make strong, him do I make the priest (*brahmā*), the seer, the sage.

6. For Rudra I stretch the bow, that the arrow may smite the hater of the spell (*brahma*). For the people I make strife. I penetrate heaven and earth.

7. I give birth to the father in his head.[2] My birthplace is within the waters, the ocean. Thence I spread through all beings, and touch with my head this heaven.

8. I blow forth even as the wind, reaching all beings, beyond heaven, beyond this earth. Such have I become through my greatness.

[1] This clause is according to the Atharvaveda. The Rigveda reads, " Me, who cause to penetrate many regions."

[2] I.e. I give birth to the heaven (sky) at the top of the heaven (Bergaigne).

XLI

TO VĀTA, THE WIND

1. Declare the might of Vāta's chariot. Crushing in pieces he goes. Thundering is his roar. He touches the sky as he advances, making (the clouds) ruddy, and speeds over the earth, whirling up dust.

2. Behind him rise the blasts of Vāta. They advance to him like women to a meeting. United with them, in the same car, hastens the God, the king of the whole world.

3. Hastening through the air on his ways he never rests. The friend of the Waters, the first-born, law-maintaining—where has he been born? Whence has he arisen?

4. The breath (*ātman*) of the Gods, the germ of the world, this God wanders at his will. His roarings are heard, not (seen) is his form. This Vāta let us worship with an oblation.

XLII

TO THE WATERS

The Waters are divine, but it is the natural object that is worshipped, not a deity behind them, as in the case of the Greek Naiads. There are hymns also to individual rivers, especially the Sindhu (Indus) and its tributaries. The Sarasvatī, a lost river, becomes later the goddess of eloquence.

1. With the Ocean as their chief the restless Waters flow purified from the midst of the

(heavenly) sea. May the divine Waters, for whom the thunderbolt-bearing Indra, the Bull, dug a path, help me here.

2. May the Waters of the sky, may those that flow produced by digging, and those that spring of themselves, the clear and purifying divine Waters that flow to the Ocean, help me.

3. In the midst of whom king Varuṇa goes, looking down on the truth and falsehood of men, may the clear and purifying divine Waters dropping sweetness help me.

4. In whom king Varuṇa, in whom Soma, in whom all the Gods enjoy strength, into whom Agni Vaiśvānara [1] has entered, may the divine Waters help me.

XLIII

VIŚVĀMITRA AND THE RIVERS

This dialogue between the sage Viśvāmitra (of the tribe of the Bharatas) and the rivers is treated by the commentators as a hymn to Indra. It is, in fact, a spell for making a river fordable. The Śutudrī is the modern Sutlej, the most eastern of the five rivers of the Punjab, and the Vipāś (modern Beas) is a tributary, both flowing into the Indus. The last verse is said to be the actual spell used by Viśvāmitra, but it may be an addition to the original hymn. In the Gṛihya Sūtras, the rules for household ceremonies, this verse is prescribed to be used for the wedding car, if it gets into a deep place on crossing a river.

1. (*Viśvāmitra*) Forth from the lap of the mountains, eager, like two mares unharnessed,

[1] A special form of Agni. Some of the oldest commentators identified him with the Sun.

contending; like two shining mother cows licking (their young), Vipāś and Śutudrī hasten with their water.

2. Urged by Indra, imploring his impulse, down to the ocean as on a chariot ye go; flowing together, swelling with your billows, one of you enters the other, O shining ones.

3. To the most motherly of rivers I have come; we have arrived at the wide Vipāś, the gracious. Like mothers together licking a calf they flow together to their common bed.

4. (*Rivers*) We two swelling with water flow to the God-made bed. Our impulse rushing on in its course is not to be stayed: what does the priest desire, who invokes the rivers?

5. (*Viśvāmitra*) Tarry at my friendly voice, O law-maintaining ones, for a moment in your course. To the river (comes) my great hymn. Beseeching favour I, the son of Kuśika, invoke you.

6. (*Rivers*) Indra armed with the thunderbolt dug us out. He smote down Vṛitra the encloser of the rivers. God Savitar the fair-handed led us, and at his impulse we flow abroad.

7. (*Viśvāmitra*) Praiseworthy for ever is the heroic deed, that deed of Indra, in that he hewed down the Serpent. With his thunderbolt he smote down the obstructors. The waters flowed forth eager for their course.

8. (*Rivers*) Forget not this word, O singer,

which generations to come shall proclaim for thee. In hymns, O poet, cherish us ; humble us not among men ; to thee be worship.

9. (*Viśvāmitra*) Give ear, O sisters, to the poet. He has come to you from far with wagon and chariot. Bow ye down, be easy to cross. With your streams, O rivers, reach not to the axles.

10. (*Rivers*) O poet, we give ear to thy words. Thou hast come from far with wagon and chariot. (*One river*) I bend down to thee as a suckling mother. (*The other*) As a maiden to her lover I open my arms to thee.

11. (*Viśvāmitra*) Now when the Bharatas, the troop intent on booty, impelled by Indra, have crossed over thee, may your impulse flow rushing on in its course. I implore the favour of you worshipful ones.

12. The Bharatas seeking booty crossed over ; the priest obtained the favour of the rivers. Swell out, rushing forth, bounteous ones, fill your channels, roll swiftly.

13. May your waves strike out the pins of the car. Leave the thongs free, O Waters. May not the two sinless ones, the innocent oxen, be lost.[1]

[1] For the kind of spell that consists in recording a previous wonderful event compare the Old High German charm for nose-bleeding : "Christ and John went to the Jordan. Then said Christ : Stand, Jordan, until I and John have gone over thee. As Jordan then stood, so stand thou blood of [person's name]. Let this be said three times, and each time let a knot be made in the man's hair."—Schauffler, *Althochd. Lit.*, p. 49.

XLIV

ARAṆYĀNĪ, GODDESS OF THE FOREST

A hymn to win the favour of the forest goddess, as the traveller goes through the jungle, and the uncanny sights and sounds (verses 3, 4) work upon his fear and imagination. The creatures in verse 2 are perhaps birds. Vṛishārava means "roaring like a bull." Chichchika is said to be so called from its making the sound *chichchi*.

1. Araṇyānī, Araṇyānī, who wanderest as if lost, why dost thou not ask for the village? Does not fear overtake thee?

2. When to the cry of the vṛishārava the chichchika responds, Araṇyānī goes proudly, running as though at the sound of cymbals.

3. It is as though oxen were feeding, and as though one saw a house. And at evening Araṇyānī creaks like a wagon.

4. There someone calls a cow, there another fells a tree. The dweller in the forest thinks at night, "someone shouted."

5. Araṇyānī smites not, unless another comes (to do it). (The traveller) eats sweet fruit, and lies down at his will.

6. I have praised Araṇyānī, her with goodly unguents, the sweetly scented, rich in food without tillage, the mother of wild beasts.

XLV

ṚIBHU AND HIS COMPANIONS

Ṛibhu or Ṛibhukshan is the name of the first of three skilful workmen, originally mortals, the other two being Vāja and Vibhvan. For their feats of skill they were rewarded with immortality. By a common Vedic idiom the name of one may be used in the plural to refer to all. "The Ṛibhus" thus means "Ṛibhu and his two companions." We are told that the name Ṛibhu seems to be identical with the German *elbe* and the English *elf*. What is certain is that the German *elbe* is merely the English word borrowed and adapted by Wieland and his school in the eighteenth century, and that the German word really corresponding with *elf* is *alp*, which means "nightmare." There is a single reference to a female *elbe* in Heinrich von Morungen of the thirteenth century,[1] a being who bewitches men by her look, but the reading is uncertain, and it may refer merely to the nightmare (*alp*). In Old Swedish the form is *älf*, Danish *elv*. The identity of name after all only extends to the *f* or *b*, which corresponds to *bh* of the Sanskrit. In spite of this the beings might turn out to be identical, if common mythological features could be found for Ṛibhu, the elves, and the German nightmare; but no support is lent to this by Ludwig's theory, which makes Ṛibhu and his companions personifications of the three seasons.

1. Hither come, O sons of strength. O Ṛibhus, sons of Sudhanvan, be not far away. For at this Soma-pressing are treasures bestowed upon you. May your intoxication come after Indra.

2. The bestowal of treasures to the Ṛibhus has here arrived. There has been a drinking of

[1] Bartsch, *Deutsche Liederdichter des zwölften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1901), p. 47.

well-pressed Soma, when with excellent skill and workmanship ye made the one cup into four.

3. Ye have made the one cup into four. Ye said, "O friend, distribute."[1] Then go, O Vājas,[2] the path of immortality, O Ṛibhus dexterous-handed, to the company of the Gods.

4. Of what matter was this cup, which with wisdom ye made into four? Then let the libation be pressed for intoxication. Drink, O Ṛibhus, of the sweet Soma.

5. Through your power ye have made your father and mother young. Through your power ye have made the cup for the Gods to drink. Through your power ye have wrought the fleet fallow steeds that bear Indra, O Ṛibhus, bringers of treasures of booty.

6. He who presses for you in the eve of the day, O Vājas, the strong Soma for intoxication, for him produce wealth of men-children, O Ṛibhus, exhilarated heroes.

7. In the morning didst thou with fallow steeds (Indra) drink the pressing. The midday Soma was all thine. Drink (in the evening) with the Ṛibhus at the bestowal of treasures, whom thou hast made thy friends for their skill.

[1] Probably addressed to Indra, when they asked for their reward after dividing the cup of the gods into four.

[2] I.e. (like the plural of Ṛibhu) "Vāja and companions." This mode of expression has given rise to the illusory notion that Ṛibhus is a class-name like that of the elves.

8. Ye who became Gods through your skill, and like eagles took your seats in heaven, grant us your treasures, O sons of strength. Sons of Sudhanvan, ye have become immortals.

9. The third Soma-pressing that ye made to be the bestowal of treasures through your workmanship, dexterous-handed ones, this, O Ṛibhus, has been poured out for you here. Drink along with the intoxications of Indra.

XLVI

TO THE LORD OF THE HOUSE

The Lord of the house (Vāstoshpati) is the tutelary deity of the dwelling. He resembles the Greek heros theos and the Roman lar. The heros theos undoubtedly and probably the lar are instances of ancestor worship. There is no trace of this in the case of Vāstoshpati, who, being addressed as Indu, is thus identified with Soma, and hence probably with the moon. At the present day when a new house is built, a ceremony called *Vāstuśānti*, "pacification of the house," is performed, and this hymn forms a part of the Sanskrit verses then recited.[1] According to one Law-book, the ceremony is to be performed yearly. Others prescribe it for each season.

1. Lord of the house, acknowledge us; grant us good entrance; free us from sickness. What we implore of thee do thou bestow. Blessing to us be thou, to the two-footed, blessing to the four-footed.

[1] For this information and for discussions on other points I am indebted to my friend Govind S. Ghurye, Ph.D., of Bombay and Cambridge Universities.

2. Lord of the house, be our increase, furthering our wealth with kine and horses, O Indu. May we be free from old age in thy friendship ; cherish us as a father his children.

3. Lord of the house, may we share in thy pleasant company, delightful and propitious. In our rest and in our labour protect our weal. Ye Gods, protect us ever with blessings.

XLVII

ĀPRĪ HYMN

The Āprī hymns, of which there are ten belonging to different priestly families, are formulas of propitiation preceding the animal sacrifice, in which certain gods or deified objects are invoked in regular order. Tanūnapāt, an epithet of Agni, perhaps means "son of himself," as generated in the fire-sticks. Narāśaṃsa, "having the praise of men," is also usually an epithet of Agni. The goddess Iḷā is the deified milk and ghee of the sacrifice. Sarasvatī and Mahī are river goddesses. Vanaspati, "lord of the forest," is the sacrificial post to which the victim was tied. Cf. No. XLIX. Svāhā is the exclamation used in offering oblations to the gods.

1. Well-kindled, Agni, bring to us the Gods, to him that has the oblation, and offer sacrifice, O Hotar, purifier.

2. Bring our sweet sacrifice, O Tanūnapāt, among the Gods, O sage, to-day for the festival.

3. Narāśaṃsa the dear one I invoke hither to our sacrifice, the honey-tongued, the oblation-maker.

4. O Agni, when implored bring the Gods upon a chariot with goodly nave. Thou art Hotar established by Manu.

5. Strew evenly the sacred grass sprinkled with ghee, O pious ones, whereon there is the sight of the immortal one.[1]

6. Opened be the divine doors[2] that further the Law, the bountiful, to-day even now for sacrifice.

7. Night and Dawn well-adorned I invoke to this sacrifice, to sit on this our sacred grass.

8. The two sweet-tongued Hotars[3] I invoke, the divine, the wise. May they celebrate this our sacrifice.

9. Iḷā, Sarasvatī, Mahī, delightful ones, may they sit on the grass injuring not.

10. Hither Tvashṭar, the primal, who assumes all forms, I invoke. May he be ours alone.

11. O Forest-lord, O God, let our oblation flow to the Gods. May the signal of the giver[4] be present.

[1] Perhaps Indra. It is on the sacred grass that the gods sit.

[2] The doors of heaven. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (ii. 4) says: "He invites the Doors to the sacrifice. Now the Doors are rain. Thus he delights rain. Rain and proper food he bestows on the sacrificer."

[3] Agni and Soma.

[4] According to Sāyaṇa, the sacrificer, i.e. the person for whom the ceremony is performed, and who pays for it. But the meaning (with change of accent) is probably "divider of the victim."

12. With Svāhā perform the sacrifice to Indra in the sacrificer's house. Thither I invoke the Gods.

XLVIII

TO THE HORSE

The horse-sacrifice is celebrated in two hymns. The performance, as described in the Brāhmaṇas and Law-books, belonged to kings, and consisted in allowing a horse to roam freely for a year attended by royal and other officials. It was thus a challenge to the supremacy of any other ruler into whose kingdom the horse might stray. The sacrifice was made before a campaign or after a victory. After the return of the horse the ceremony lasted three days. On the second the actual sacrifice was performed, when the horse was covered with a cloth and stifled. A goat and many other animals were also included. The reference to the axe is its use in dismembering the victim when its limbs were roasted. In the *Mahābhārata* (Book xiv. 71 ff.) the sacrifice was performed by Yudhishṭhira after the great battle, and references in inscriptions show that it was performed by kings in historical times. In Buddhist writings both this and human sacrifices are specially condemned. See the article "Aśvamedha," by K. F. Geldner, in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.*

1. May Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, Āyu,[1] Indra lord of the Ṛibhus, and the Maruts not forget us, when we proclaim the heroic deeds of the god-born horse at our sacrifice.

2. When they lead the gift that has been won before the horse adorned with glorious trappings,

[1] The word means "moving." The Indian commentators explain it as Vāyu (wind). See note, p. 61.

in front goes the goat of many hues bleating to the dear place of Indra and Pūshan.

3. This goat that belongs to all the Gods is led before the strong horse as the share of Pūshan, when Tvashṭar brings him as grateful offering along with the steed for glorious fame.

4. When the men lead the horse as oblation three times duly round on the way of the Gods, then the goat goes as the first share of Pūshan, announcing to the Gods the sacrifice.

5. Hotar, Adhvaryu, Āvayās, Agnimindha, Grāvagrābha, Śaṃstar, and Suvipra,[1] with the sacrifice well prepared and well offered fill ye the beds (of the rivers).[2]

6. They that hew the sacrificial post and they that bear it, they that hew the knob for the post, and they that prepare the vessel for the horse—may their hymn of praise further us.

7. He started—therewith was put my hymn —the broad-backed one to the Gods' abode. In him the wise sages rejoice. We have made him a good kinsman at the feast of the Gods.

8. The strong steed's girth, the strap, the fetter,

[1] These are the names of the officiating priests, not all of which can be now identified: The Hotar recited the prayers, the Adhvaryu performed the manual acts, the Agnimindha was the "fire-kindler," the Grāvagrābha the Soma-presser, and the Suvipra probably the brahman-priest. Śaṃstar means "praising," and may be an epithet of Suvipra.

[2] This is the cosmical effect of the sacrifice, but it may refer to filling the "udders" (the water-reservoirs) of the sky.

the headband and cord, the grass that is put in thy mouth, all these be with thee among the Gods.

9. That which a fly ate of the horse's flesh, or what clung to the post, to the axe or the hands and nails of the slayer, all these be with thee among the Gods.

10. That which exhales from the belly, the odour of the raw flesh, shall the slayers set aright, and make the sacrifice (*medha*) duly roasted.

11. That which runs from thy limbs roasted by the fire, when thou art fixed on the spit, shall not cling to the ground or the (sacrificial) grass. Be it offered to the Gods that long for it.

12. They that inspect the roasted horse and say, "the odour is good, take it away," and they that approach [1] to beg for the flesh of the steed—may their hymn of praise further us.

13. The stick to test the vessel that roasts the flesh, the pots for the broth, the dishes, the lids of the cauldrons, the hooks, the spits, stand ready for the horse.

14. That on which it has stood, sat, or turned, the steed's foot-fetter, that which it drank, the food it ate, all these be with thee among the Gods.

15. May not the fire smelling of smoke make

[1] To be understood of the priests, among whom in later times portions of the victim were distributed according to rule (Hillebrandt).

thee crackle, may not the glowing, seething vessel shake. May the Gods accept the horse over which the sacred formulas [1] have been spoken.

16. The cover that they spread for the horse, which is placed above him, the golden ornaments, the foot-fetter that binds the steed, these as dear to the Gods they send.

17. When, seated upon thee mightily snorting, I have smitten thee with heel or whip, with my prayer I make all this good to thee, as with the spoon of the oblation at the sacrifice.

18. The axe pierces the thirty-four ribs of the strong horse, the kinsman of the Gods. Leave with skill the limbs unbroken. Limb by limb, calling out, divide him.

19. One is the divider of the horse of Tvashṭar. Two are the holders. Thus is the Law. All thy limbs that I set up duly I offer in the fire with cakes of rice.

20. May not thy dear self (*ātman*) pain thee when thou departest. May not the axe stay over thee. May no hasty unskilled slayer, missing the mark, wrongly divide thy limbs with the hatchet.

21. Thou diest not here, nor receivest hurt. Thou goest to the Gods by easy ways. The two fallow horses (of Indra), the two dappled ones (of the Maruts), have become thy companions.

[1] Here occur four technical terms for the formulas used in the actual ceremony.

The strong horse has taken his place by the carriage-pole of the ass (of the Aśvins).

22. Treasure of cows and goodly horses, men-children, and all-nourishing wealth may the horse grant us. Sinlessness may Aditi bestow on us. May the horse with the oblation procure us lordship.

XLIX

TO THE SACRIFICIAL POST

There is evidence in the Veda for the worship of objects that possess divine or magical powers, but which are not personal beings. This is usually called fetishism, but it is not easy to determine its extent without ascertaining the actual belief under which the object was viewed. Thus the worship of the sacrificial post (*yūpa*) is not fetishistic, as it is a tree, and trees are divine beings or the bodies in which they are incarnate. One whole hymn is in praise of plants, the divine mothers, who have Soma as their king.

1. At the offering the devout anoint thee with divine sweetness, O Forest-lord. Grant us treasures both when thou standest here upright and when thy place is on the lap of this mother (earth).

2. Standing eastwards before the kindled fire, accepting the unaging glorious spell (*brahma*), and driving want far from us, raise thyself up to great good fortune.

3. Raise up thyself, O Forest-lord, on the summit of the earth. Being set up with good setting bestow glory on the bringers of the sacrifice.

4. Young, robed in fair garments, he has come. Still fairer he becomes when born. The steadfast sages set him up, the devout ones observant in spirit.

5. When born he is born in the serenity of days, at the feast in the assembly growing strong. The steadfast skilful ones in their wisdom adorn him.

6. O chips that devout men set up, O Forest-lord that the axe wrought, may these chips standing as Gods deign to bestow on us wealth of offspring.

7. The splintered ones set up on the earth, to whom the sacrificial spoon is offered, may they bring us treasure among the Gods and win lands.

8. May the Ādityas, the Rudras, the Vasus with good leading, the Sky and the Ground, the Earth, and Air, Gods united, aid the sacrifice. May they raise on high the signal of the offering.

9. Like geese flying in rows, brightly robed, the chips have come to us. Set up on the east by the wise the Gods enter the place of the Gods.

10. Like the horns of horned cattle appear the chips furnished with knobs on the earth; or listening at the imploring of the sacrificer, may they help us in the battle-contests.

11. O Forest-lord, grow thou up hundred-branched. May we grow thousand-branched, O thou whom this axe being sharpened has brought to great good fortune.

L

TO THE PRIESTS' FEE

The fee to the priests (*dakshinā*) is said to have been originally a cow. As an essential part of the sacrifice it could be looked upon as instrumental in the actual performance, and hence deified. One hymn (i. 18, 5) says: "Do thou, Brahmaṇaspati, Soma, Indra, and Fee, protect mortals from calamity." The soma-pressing stones also have hymns addressed to them, and various weapons and instruments are invoked. This indicates to how small a degree personification was necessary in order that an object might be considered divine.

1. Their great bounty [1] was manifested. All life was freed from darkness. The great light that the Fathers gave has come. The wide path of the Fee has appeared.

2. The givers of the Fee have mounted high in heaven. The givers of horses were united with the Sun. The givers of gold attain immortality. The givers of raiment, O Soma, extend their lives.

3. The Fee is a gift to the Gods, a sacrifice for the Gods. Nought is it for the misers, for they fulfil it not. But many men that offer the Fee fulfil it through fear of sin.

4. The inspectors of men (rulers) look on the oblation as the wind with a hundred streams, as the light-bringing sun. They that fulfil it, and

[1] This was the bounty, the Fee or dakshiṇā given by the Fathers, whose Fee was the Dawn.

offer it in the assembly, milk the Fee that has seven mothers.[1]

5. The Fee-giver comes first invited. The Fee-giver goes in front as chief of the clan. Him, I hold, is a king of men who first introduced the Fee.

6. Him they call a sage, a brahman-priest, a leader of the sacrifice, a singer of Sāman-verses, a reciter of hymns. He knows the three bodies of holy speech who was first successful with the Fee.

7. The Fee gives horses, the Fee gives kine, the Fee gives silver and gold. The Fee bestows food, which is our life (*ātman*). The discerning man puts on the Fee as armour.

8. The liberal are not dead, they have not fallen into calamity. The liberal are hurt not nor totter. All this world and the whole heavens the Fee gives them.

9. The liberal won first a perfumed home, the liberal won a spouse in fair garments, the liberal won the drink of surā,[2] the liberal won them that come forward uncalled.

10. For the liberal one they curry a swift horse, for the liberal one a maiden waits bedecking herself, the liberal one's house is like a lotus lake, adorned and brilliant like the abodes of the Gods.

11. Horses easily pulling bear the liberal one. Easily rolls the chariot of the Fee. Help, O Gods,

[1] The seven forms of the Soma-sacrifice (Sāyaṇa).
[2] An intoxicating liquor used in secular life.

the liberal one in winning booty. The liberal one is victor of his enemy in battles.[1]

LI

SPELLS FOR THE WAR CHARIOT AND WAR DRUM

The two following spells for the success of the chariot and drum in battle occur in a hymn addressed to Soma, Indra, and other deities. They are also found in a long hymn in the Yajurveda, and form two separate hymns in the Atharvaveda.

1. O Forest-lord (chariot), strong-limbed, indeed mayst thou become our friend, our saviour, rich in heroes. Bound together with oxhides art thou, show thyself strong; may he who mounts thee conquer the conquerable.

2. To the force (of the chariot) brought up from the sky, from the earth, to its power brought together from the forest-trees, to the strength of the waters, covered with oxhides, to Indra's thunderbolt, the Chariot, offer sacrifice with oblation.

3. Thou, Indra's thunderbolt, the Marut's face, Mitra's embryo, Varuṇa's navel, do thou, divine Chariot, enjoying this our oblation-giving, accept the oblations.

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4. Sound thou through earth and sky; in

[1] The word for "liberal" is *bhoja*. It is later the name of a king, and in this hymn may refer to a particular individual.

many places may the scattered living creatures attend to thee. Do thou, O Drum, with Indra and the Gods drive away our enemies further than far.

5. Resound thou ; grant us force and strength. Thunder aloud, driving away dangers. Repel, O Drum, misfortunes hence. Indra's fist art thou ; show thyself strong.

6. Drive those (cows) hither, bring back those. As a signal the Drum sounds loudly. May our heroes horse-winged fly together ; may our charioteers, O Indra, conquer.

LII

ELECTION OF A KING

The conception of kingship as a development of the magician and medicine-man stands in marked contrast with Vedic custom. Here the king is chosen by "the tribes," his subjects, as is said in x. 124, 8. But this choosing may merely imply his acceptance by the people. For religious functions he employs a family priest, who, as in this hymn, utters a spell for his welfare. Similar verses occur also in the Atharvaveda.

1. Thee have I chosen. Be thou among (us). Firm stand thou unwavering. May the tribes [1] all desire thee. May sovereignty not depart from thee.

[1] *Viśas*, but it may mean "subjects." It is from this word that the name of the third caste, the Vaiśyas, is derived.

2. Even here do thou abide. Fall not away, unwavering as a mountain. Like Indra stand here firm. Here maintain thy sovereignty.

3. Him has Indra established firm with the firm oblation. To him may Soma speak with favour, to him Brahmaṇaspati.

4. Firm is the heaven, firm the earth, firm these mountains. Firm is all this world, firm this king of the tribes.

5. Firm may king Varuṇa, firm may God Bṛihaspati, firm may Indra and Agni maintain thy sovereignty firm.

6. With the firm oblation we touch the firm Soma. So may Indra make all the tribes pay tribute to thee.

LIII

TO THE HOUSE DOG

The gods of this hymn, according to the commentary, which treats all the hymns as addressed to some divinity, are the Lord of the house (Vāstoshpati) in the first verse, and Indra in the rest. It is by this device of ascription to some god that hymns of very various character have been included in the collection. The hymn is really a charm to put to sleep the house dog and the people of the house. Four of the verses occur in a hymn of the Atharvaveda, where the purpose is evidently to cause the people of the house to sleep while a lover pays a nightly visit. The motive may be the same in the present hymn, but it is not certain that the charm was always used for the same purpose. It has been held that the first verse really belongs to another

hymn, but it is easy to see why an intending intruder should wish to propitiate the protecting divinity.

1. O slayer of diseases, Lord of the house, assuming all forms, be our kindly friend.

2. When thou showest thy teeth, O silver-white and brown, son of Saramā, they shine like spears in the jaws of the biter. Fall asleep.

3. Bark at the thief, O son of Saramā, or at the robber, thou that runnest back. Thou barkest at the praisers of Indra. Why dost thou seek to harm us? Fall asleep.

4. Rend the boar. May the boar rend thee. Thou barkest at the praisers of Indra. Why dost thou seek to harm us? Fall asleep.

5. May the mother sleep, the father, the dog, the householder. Sleep all this kinsfolk, and all this people round.

6. We close the eyes of him who sits and him who goes, and of the people who behold us, thus like this dwelling.

7. With the powerful thousand-horned bull, who came out of the ocean, we put the people to sleep.

8. The women lying on beds, lying on litters, on couches, women sweetly scented, we put them all to sleep.

LIV

TO YAMA

Yama, the god of Death, son of Vivasvant, goes back to the Indo-Iranian period, and corresponds to the Avestan Yima, a legendary king, son of Vivahvant. His original character is disputed. It is not even agreed whether his name means "twin" or "tamer." He has been held to be "the first royal man who started the practice of dying," or Agni, or the setting sun, or the moon. The significance of the two dogs, Yama's messengers, is equally doubtful. In the Avesta two dogs guard the Cinvad bridge, over which the dead pass to Paradise. Bloomfield explains them as the sun and moon, but in the Veda they appear to be unrelated to any nature myth.

1. To him who towards the great slopes hath departed, who to great multitudes the path hath pointed, Vivasvant's son, assembler of the peoples, to Yama, king, show honour with an offering.

2. Yama to us the way hath first discovered. May not this pasturage be ravished from us, whither our ancient fathers have departed, they that were born here on their own paths faring.

7. (*To the dead*) Go forth, go forth, along the paths, where fathers of ours before have travelled on aforetime. Both kings exulting in their own oblations, God Varuṇa shalt thou behold and Yama.

8. Come with the fathers, come along with Yama, with gifts and offerings[1] in the highest

[1] I.e. the good works for which he is now rewarded.

heaven. Come home again, leaving behind all evil. Come with thy body, full of life and vigour.

9. (*Against demons*) Depart ye, go your ways from here, disperse ye. For him that place the fathers have made ready, adorned with days, adorned with nights and waters. Yama to him a place of resting giveth.

10. (*To the dead*) Past the two hounds of Saramā then haste thee, the four-eyed ones, the spotted, on the path direct. Thus shalt thou come unto the kindly fathers, who feast with Yama in a common feasting.

11. (*To Yama*) To these two hounds, O Yama, these protectors, the four-eyed ones, path-guarding, men-beholding, unto these two, O king, do thou entrust him. And grant him, Yama, happiness and welfare.

12. (*To the living*) The two broad-nosed, the two life-robbing ones, the brown, the messengers of Yama, go among mankind. May they, that we may see the sun, bestow again both here and now upon us goodly life.

13. For Yama press the Soma-juice, for Yama pour the sacrifice. To Yama goes the offering by Agni brought, its messenger.

14. To Yama the oblation pour, most rich in ghee, and draw ye nigh. May he among the Gods bestow long-lasting life, that we may live.

15. To Yama, king, the sacrifice, most rich in

sweetness, offer ye. This worship be for the ancestral sages, the former makers of the way.

16. With the three Soma-bowls he flies. The six are wide, and one is great.[1] Trishṭubh, Gāyatrī, metres all, they all in Yama are contained.

LV

FUNERAL HYMN

As this and the previous hymn show, the dead, when duly cremated or buried, rest in a place of bliss with the other virtuous departed. Nothing is known of the fate of the wicked or of a place of punishment. There is no evidence for the belief in transmigration in the hymns, nor in the Brāhmaṇas of the Rigveda, though an attempt has been made to trace it in a verse of Hymn x. 16, 3: "May his eye go to the sun, his breath (*ātman*) to the wind. Go to heaven and earth according to ordinance. Or go to the waters, if there it is granted thee. In plants abide with thy limbs." But these words may refer merely to the dispersion of the body that is being cremated, as the seer says of the man himself in the next verse: "With the kindly forms which thou hast, O Agni, bear him to the world of the righteous." The transmigration doctrine first appears clearly in the Upanishads. The supposition that it was borrowed from the non-Aryans, though a possibility, is without any support, and appears to be due to an unwillingness to admit that the Indians might have been capable of evolving it for themselves.

1. Soma is being purified for some (of the fathers); some sit by the ghee. For whom the

[1] Or, "the one great (Bṛihat metre) flies through the six wide (heavens)." The verse is probably a riddling expression of the theory that the metres are a constituent part of the cosmos, as they were used in the primeval sacrifice by which the world was formed. Cf. No. LVIII.

sweet drink flows forth, even to them do thou go.

2. To those who through penance are irresistible, who through penance have gone to heaven, to those who have made penance a greatness to themselves, even to them do thou go.

3. To those that fight for booty, heroes that relinquish their lives, or who have given thousands of gifts for the sacrifice, even to them do thou go.

4. To those ancient fathers, practisers of penance, that follow Law, maintain Law, further Law, even to them, O Yama, let him go.

5. To those sages with a thousand paths, who protect the sun, to the seers, the practisers of penance, born from penance, to them, O Yama, let him also go.

LVI

FUNERAL VERSES

Although this hymn is used in the later ritual, the details of the Vedic ceremony are not all understood. Verses 1–7 are a purification ceremony for those who take part in the burial. The last words of verse 7, *yonim agre*, "in front to the place," became corrupted into *yonim agneh*, "the place of fire," and were used as Vedic evidence of widow-burning Although this practice was no doubt ancient, at least in royal families, there is no trace of it in the Veda, and verse 8 is directly against it. This verse may be intended to be used when the rule that a widow without children should marry a brother of the deceased was applied.

1. Pass on, O Death, another way, which is thine own, other than the way of the Gods. To

thee who hast eyes and ears I speak. Hurt not our offspring nor our heroes.

2. (*To the mourners*) When ye come, barring the foot of Death, extending further a longer life, rich in offspring and in wealth, may ye be pure and purified, worthy to share in the sacrifice.

3. These living ones have returned from the dead. Our invocation has been auspicious today. Forward did we go to dance and laughter, extending further a longer life.

4. I set this fence for the living. May no other of them reach this end. May they live full a hundred autumns. May they shut in Death with the stone.

5. As the days arise one after another, as the seasons duly go with the seasons, in order that the latter may not leave the former,[1] so order, O Disposer, their lives.

6. Mount up to life, choosing old age, going after one another, as many as ye are. Here may Tvashṭar, the fashioner of fair things, like-minded with you, work long life for you to live.

7. May the women here unwidowed, with noble husbands, with balm and unguent enter together. Without tears, without sickness, with goodly jewels, let the women go in front to the place.

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8. (*To the wife*) Rise up, O woman, to the world of the living. Thou liest by him whose life

[1] I.e. that the son may not die before his father.

is gone. Come. Thou hast attained wifehood with him that takes thy hand and sues for thee.

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9. (*To the dead*) Taking the bow from the hand of the dead one for rule to us, for fame, for power—there art thou, here are we. Rich in men-children may we conquer all rivals and foes.

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10. Approach gently mother Earth there, the wide-extending, the very kindly ground. Soft as wool, like a young woman to the bestower of gifts, may she preserve thee from the lap of destruction.

11. Open thyself out, O Earth, press not down heavily, be easy of access to him, easy of approach. As a mother wraps her son with the hem of her robe, cover him, O Earth.

12. Let the Earth open herself and stand firm. Let a thousand posts lean above. May the abode drop with ghee. May it ever be to him a refuge there.

13. For thee I prop up the earth, placing this clod about thee. May I not be hurt. This pillar may the Fathers bear up for thee. May Yama set up here thy dwelling.[1]

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[1] Verses 10–13 are prescribed in the *Household Sūtra of Āśvalāyana* (iv. 5) to be used in collecting and burying the bones : " Having well gathered (the bones) and purified them

14. On the day that is departing they have set me down as the feather of an arrow. I have held back my speech as a horse with reins.

LVII

A CHARM FOR RESTORING TO LIFE

The use of this charm, as Hillebrandt points out, was probably for restoring a person who had lost consciousness during the performance of the Soma-sacrifice. The word *manas* for spirit or soul is the usual one in the Vedas. Later it means "mind" as distinct from soul (*ātman*), but *ātman* in the Vedas is "breath, self," and has not yet acquired the usual philosophical sense. The different regions named in the hymn do not appear to imply a theory of the abode of the dead, but to be used so that every place should be mentioned to which the man's spirit may have gone.

1. That spirit of thine, which has gone far away to Yama, son of Vivasvant, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

2. That spirit of thine, which has gone far

with a winnowing fan, let them put (the urn) into the pit, where waters from all sides do not flow together other than rainwater (saying), 'Approach gently mother Earth there' (v. 10). With the following (v. 11) let him throw earth into the pit. After having thrown it in (let him repeat) the next (v. 12). Saying, 'For thee I prop up' (v. 13), and having covered (the urn) with a lid, without looking back let them march away, and having purified themselves with water let them perform an oblation to him (the deceased)." Winternitz holds that these verses applied originally to burial without cremation. This is very probable, though cremation was certainly practised by the Vedic Indians.

away to the heaven, to the earth, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

3. That spirit of thine, which has gone far away to the four-quartered earth, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

4. That spirit of thine, which has gone far away to the four world-regions, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

5. That spirit of thine, which has gone far away to the billowy ocean, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

6. That spirit of thine, which has gone far away to the swift rays of light, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

7. That spirit of thine, which has gone far away to the waters, to the plants, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

8. That spirit of thine, which has gone far away to the Sun, to the Dawn, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

9. That spirit of thine, which has gone far away to the great mountains, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

10. That spirit of thine, which has gone far away into this whole world, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

11. That spirit of thine, which has gone far away into the remotest distances, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

12. That spirit of thine, which has gone far

away to that which has been and shall be, we bring back that thou mayst dwell here and live.

LVIII

TO THE PURUSHA

There is no clear evidence in the Veda of human sacrifice being performed, but it is described in the Law-books, where it is only symbolical, the victim being ransomed for 100 horses and 1,000 cows. The formation of the universe is described in this hymn (known as the Purusha-sūkta) as a sacrifice celebrated by the gods, in which the universe is a man (*purusha*). Verse 12 contains the only mention in the Rigveda of the four classes of society from which the various castes are supposed by the Law-books to be descended through intermixture. It is no doubt a very late hymn, as is shown by the mention of the three Vedas. It also occurs with differences in the Yajurveda and Atharvaveda.

1. Thousand-headed was the Purusha, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed. He embraced the earth on all sides, and stood beyond the breadth of ten fingers.

2. The Purusha is this all, that which was and which shall be. He is Lord of immortality, which he grows beyond through (sacrificial) food.

3. Such is his greatness, and still greater than that is the Purusha. One fourth of him is all beings. The three fourths of him is the immortal in Heaven.

4. Three fourths on high rose the Purusha. One fourth of him arose again here (on the earth).

Thence in all directions he spread abroad, as that which eats and that which eats not.

5. From him Virāj was born, from Virāj the Purusha.[1] He when born reached beyond the earth behind as well as before.

6. When the Gods spread out the sacrifice with the Purusha as oblation, spring was its ghee, summer the fuel, autumn the oblation.

7. As the sacrifice on the strewn grass they besprinkled the Purusha, born in the beginning. With him the Gods sacrificed, the Sādhyas [2] and the sages.

8. From that sacrifice completely offered was the sprinkled ghee collected. He made it the beasts of the air, of the forest, and those of the village.

9. From that sacrifice completely offered were born the Verses (Rigveda) and the Sāman-melodies (Sāmaveda). The metres were born from it. From it was born the Sacrificial formula (Yajurveda).

10. From it were born horses, and they that have two rows of teeth. Cattle were born from it. From it were born goats and sheep.

11. When they divided the Purusha, into how

[1] This is unexplained. Virāj has been interpreted as the female principle, which with the primal Purusha produces the concrete universe. In the Atharvaveda she is an independent creative principle, identified with the Spell (*brahma*), with Speech, and with Prajāpati.

[2] A class of gods.

many parts did they arrange him? What was his mouth? What his two arms? What are his thighs and feet called?

12. The Brahmin was his mouth, his two arms were made the Rājanya (warrior), his two thighs the Vaiśya (trader and agriculturist), from his feet the Śūdra (servile class) was born.

13. The moon was born from his spirit (*manas*), from his eye was born the sun, from his mouth Indra and Agni, from his breath Vāyu (wind) was born.

14. From his navel arose the middle sky, from his head the heaven originated, from his feet the earth, the quarters from his ear. Thus did they fashion the worlds.

15. Seven were his sticks that enclose (the fire), thrice seven were made the faggots. When the Gods spread out the sacrifice, they bound the Purusha as a victim.

16. With the sacrifice the Gods sacrificed the sacrifice. These were the first ordinances. These great powers reached to the firmament, where are the ancient Sādhyas, the Gods.

LIX

TO BṚIHASPATI

Bṛihaspati is also called Brahmaṇas pati, "lord of prayer or spell." He is associated with Indra in the release of the cows imprisoned in the cave, and with him restores the dawn and the sun. Whatever nature-myth may lie behind this

(see p. 45), there is no doubt that his activity therein is looked upon as that of the brahman-priest (*brahmā*), the reciter of the prayers and spells necessary for the success of the sacrifice and the objects to be obtained thereby, and his origin is probably to be found in the personification of this conception by the priests. Later he is identified with Prajāpati and becomes Brahmā in the sense of supreme god.

1. Bṛihaspati who stands in three abodes [1] has supported on high with thunder-roar the ends of the earth. Him of intoxicating speech have the meditating sages, the wise ones, placed at their head.

2. They (the sages) who with resounding step rejoicing, O Bṛihaspati, have stormed for us the fair-shining, motley, gliding, uninjured cow-stall. O Bṛihaspati, protect its dwelling.

3. O Bṛihaspati, from the farthest distance have they that cherish the Law sat down for thee. For thee wells that have been dug, milked by the (soma-pressing) stones, drip from all sides abundance of sweetness.

4. Bṛihaspati, when first born from the great light in the highest firmament, seven-mouthed, born a mighty one with the thunder-roar, seven-rayed he blew away the darkness.

5. He with his fair-praising singing troop broke open with thunder-roar the cave that shut in (the cows). Bṛihaspati roaring drove out the ruddy lowing ones that sweeten the oblation.

6. So we will serve the father of all the Gods,

[1] The three sacrificial fires

the Bull, with sacrifices, with worship, with oblations. O Bṛihaspati, having good offering of men-children may we be lords of wealth.

7. That king overcomes all his enemies by his strength and valour who keeps a Bṛihaspati [1] well nourished, who favours him, lauds him as having the first portion (of the offering).

8. That king abides well established in his dwelling ; to him the sacrificial food is ever fruitful. To him the tribes even of themselves make obeisance, with whom a brahman-priest has precedence.

9. Irresistible he conquers wealth both of his enemies and his own people. The king who provides ease for the brahman-priest that desires his help, him the Gods aid.

10. O Indra and Bṛihaspati, drink the Soma, exhilarated at this sacrifice, O lords of strong possessions. May the ready drops enter you both. Grant wealth wholly of men-children.

11. O Bṛihaspati and Indra, be this your goodwill present to us. Help the devotions. Rouse the giving of offerings. Exhaust the hostilities of foe and of aggressors.

[1] Here in the sense of a brahman-priest. The singer, a priest himself, is pointing out the duty of kings.

LX

TO PRAJĀPATI

Prajāpati, "Lord of offspring," found only in late hymns, is in one place an epithet of Savitar, and thus may have developed from the Sun-god. To this his name Golden Germ (*hiraṇyagarbha*) points. Later with Bṛihaspati he is identified with Brahmā. *Brahma* (neuter) in the Veda means prayer, magical formula, or spell, and *brahmā* (masculine) is the priest who exercises the magic power. Brahmā as a god is post-Vedic, and appears to have developed from Bṛihaspati or Brahmaṇaspati, "Lord of prayer," the divine priest, and to have taken over the characteristics of Prajāpati the creator. This hymn occurs in a corrupt form in the Atharva-veda, and also in the Yajurveda, which omits the last three verses that identify the god with Prajāpati. Hence in the Brāhmaṇas, "Who (*ka*) is the god?" is interpreted as "the god is Who (*ka*)," and Ka is made a proper name.

1. As the Golden Germ he arose in the beginning; when born he was the one Lord of the existent. He supported the earth and this heaven. What God with our oblation shall we worship?

2. He who gives breath, who gives strength, whose command all the Gods wait upon, whose shadow is immortality, is death—what God with our oblation shall we worship?

3. Who through his greatness over that which breathes and closes the eyes is only king of the world, who is Lord of the two-footed and four-footed—what God with our oblation shall we worship?

4. Whose are the snowy mountains through his greatness, whose, as they say, are the ocean and the Rasā,[1] whose are the regions, whose the arms [2]—what God with our oblation shall we worship ?

5. Through whom the mighty heaven and the earth have been fixed, through whom the sun has been established, through whom the firmament ; who in the middle sky measures out the air—what God with our oblation shall we worship ?

6. To whom the two realms (heaven and earth), sustained by his aid, looked up, trembling in spirit, over whom the risen sun shines—what God with our oblation shall we worship ?

7. When the great waters came, bearing all as the Germ, and generating fire (Agni), then arose the one life-spirit of the Gods—what God with our oblation shall we worship ?

8. Who through his greatness beheld the waters, that bore power and generated the sacrifice, who was the one God above the Gods —what God with our oblation shall we worship ?

9. May he not injure us, who is the generator of the earth, he of true ordinances, who produced the heaven, who produced the shining mighty waters.

[1] A mythical river surrounding the world. See note, p. 52.

[2] Perhaps the all-embracing arms of Prajāpati. Sāyaṇa understands the four quarters, and by the regions the intermediate quarters.

10. O Prajāpati, none other than thou has encompassed all these created things. May that for which we desiring have invoked thee be ours. May we become lords of wealth.

LXI

THE BEGINNING OF THINGS

The word translated "creation" (*visṛishṭi*) means strictly "emitting, discharging." Creation in the sense of making out of nothing is unknown to Indian thought. In later speculation the universe emanates from the unmanifested, and returns to it periodically. It is the conception, already implied here, not of the imposing of qualities on a formless matter, but of the emanation or emerging of what is already implicit. It leads either to making a Creator superfluous, or to identifying him with the All.

1. The non-existent was not, the existent was not then; air was not, nor the firmament that is beyond. What stirred? Where? Under whose shelter? Was the deep abyss water?

2. Death was not, immortality was not then; no distinction was there of night and day. That One breathed, windless, self-dependent. Other than That there was nought beyond.

3. Darkness there was, plunged in darkness in the beginning; undistinguished water was all this. That which was, was covered with the void; through the power of heat was produced the One.

4. Desire first stirred in it, desire that was the first seed of spirit. The connection of the existent in the non-existent the sages found, seeking in their hearts with wisdom.

5. Their cord was stretched across. Was there a below ? Was there an above ? Impregnators there were ; powers there were ; will was below ; endeavour was above.

6. Who verily knows ? Who will here declare whence this creation is born, whence it is ? On this side are the Gods [1] through the creation of this universe ; who then knows whence it has come into existence ?

7. Whence this creation has come into existence, whether he established it or did not, he who is its overseer in the highest firmament, he verily knows, or he knows not.

[1] I.e. the gods being part of the creation do not know what was before it. According to the Brāhmaṇas the gods were originally mortal. See Dr. Barnett, *loc. cit.*, p. 57.

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